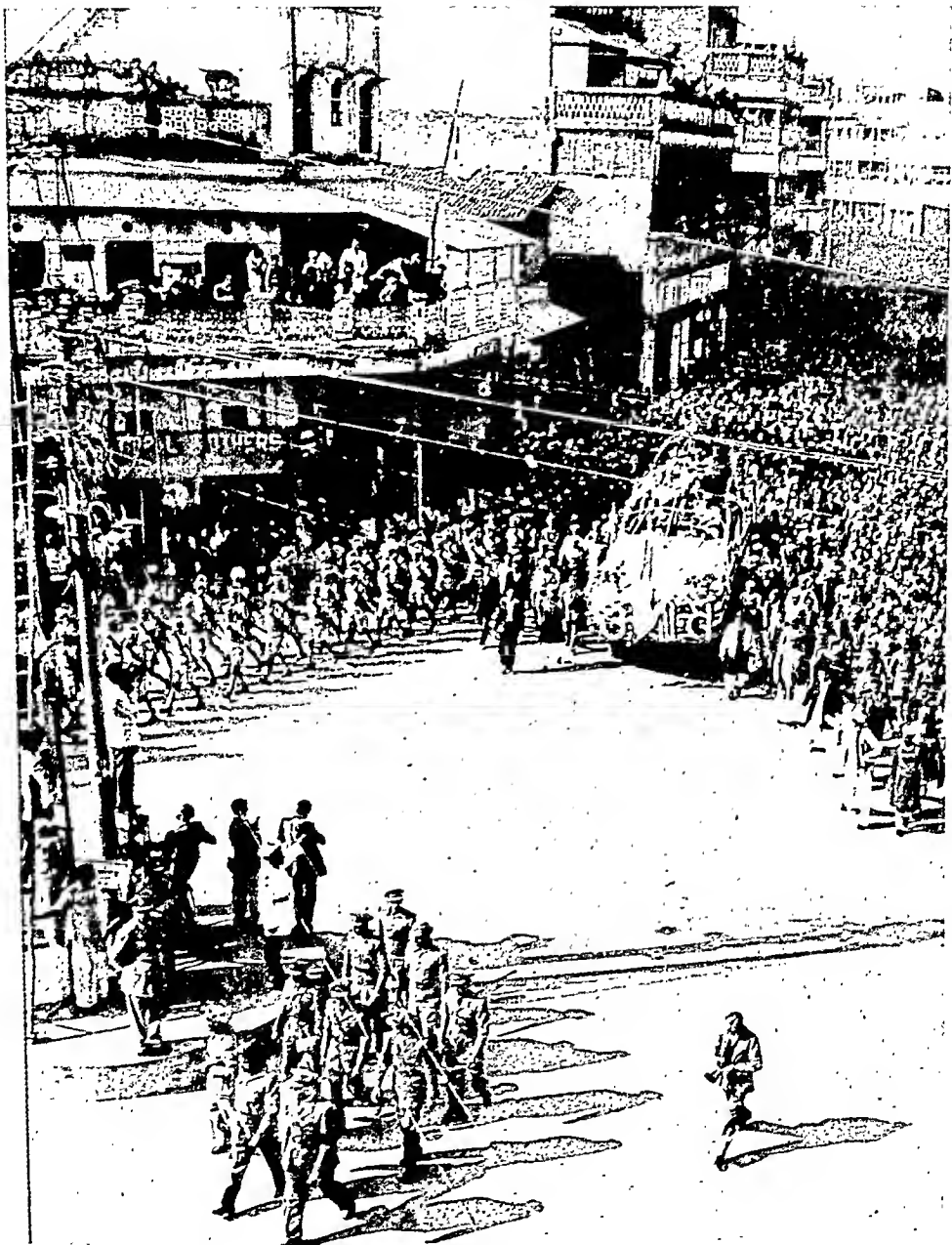


SARDAR PATEL'S CORRESPONDENCE
1945-50



THE MAMMOTH FUNERAL PROCESSION IN BOMBAY AT WHICH HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF MOURNERS BID THEIR SARDAR A TEARFUL FAREWELL

SARDAR PATEL'S CORRESPONDENCE 1945-50

VOLUME X

ACUTE POWER STRUGGLE—TRIUMPH OF MUTUAL
ACCOMMODATION—WARNING AGAINST CHINA

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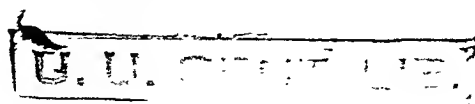
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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

This volume is the last of the series of 10 volumes of correspondence of the late Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

The correspondence starts on 1 October 1945 and covers the period from the transfer of power, which began under Lord Wavell's Viceroyalty after the release of the Congress Working Committee members from their long detention in Ahmednagar fort, and extends to the Sardar's death on 15 December 1950. This period marked the dawn of India's independence, involving partition, and finally its emergence as a sovereign democratic republic. Among those who played a crucial role in this historic process, the Sardar was one of the most outstanding.

The value of the correspondence as source material for the researcher and historian is apparent. It sheds light on the baffling problems that stood in the path of Indian unity and independence and the part the Sardar, along with Gandhiji and Jawaharlal Nehru, played in countering the policy of the British Government and the divisive tactics of the Muslim League which worked hand in glove with the representative of the Raj in India.

Independence brought to the fore the problems of the holocaust caused by partition, the rehabilitation of millions of refugees, welding together the bits and pieces which formed British and Princely India and consolidation of our hard-won freedom. The correspondence reveals in abundant measure the exertions of the Sardar in this connection in this last, epochal phase of his life which have earned an imperishable name in the annals of modern India.

These letters are being published 21 years after the death of the Sardar. This has been done in response to repeated demands to their guardians that they would serve the national interest by doing so, especially in view of the unjust and uncharitable criticism of the Sardar in some quarters. This argument assumed force after the release of Maulana Azad's posthumous publication—*India Wins Freedom*. Friends and admirers of the Sardar thought this made publication of the correspondence imperative.

The Sardar was too great a personality to be dragged into controversies born of prejudices. He moulded the history of his times and the future, and died satisfied that he had done his

duty by his country. He took a detached view of life and left it to the generations and historians of the future to assess his role in attaining and consolidating freedom. His views on Tibet and China stand vindicated, and so also are his ideas about the future of East Pakistan, which has now emerged as independent Bangladesh.

The Sardar wanted to build a strong united India nurtured by its own traditions and thought. He believed that only such a dynamic nation could contribute to world peace. At this distance in time, we can see the events of those fateful years in their proper perspective. Moreover, the nation is again passing through very critical times. This was, therefore, the opportune moment for placing these papers in the hands of his countrymen. The correspondence has been arranged as far as possible chronologically and episode-wise. It throws light on an aspect of the Sardar's work which has so far remained obscure.

We owe a word of gratitude to the Sardar's daughter, Kumari Maniben Patel. After the Sardar's death, she preserved these papers with great care and readily agreed to their publication. Not only this, she had a hand in the meticulous scrutiny and compilation of these papers. By her efforts the authenticity of these records has been vouchsafed and the Navajivan Trust has been able to publish them with a sense of redeeming a part of its debt to the Sardar.

We are grateful to Shri Durga Das, a veteran journalist of New Delhi who in the line of duty witnessed, chronicled and even participated in many of the events of this stirring period. We therefore decided to approach him to undertake the arduous task of editing the voluminous correspondence. He has processed this vast accumulation of material with professional skill, arranging it thematically and making it meaningful to the average reader. For him this has been a labour of love. We also thank his aides and the staff of the Navajivan Trust who assisted in bringing this massive undertaking to a successful close.

7-4-1974

Shantilal H. Shah

FOREWORD

The correspondence of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, now completed in ten volumes, covers a crucial period in India's history: 1 October 1945 to 13 December 1950—two days before his death in Bombay.

The letters and annexures consist of exchanges between Sardar Patel on the one hand and Lord Wavell, Lord Mountbatten, Jawaharlal Nehru, Rajendra Prasad, C. Rajagopalachari, rulers of Princely States, Premiers of Congress Ministries and scores of Congressmen belonging to the party rank and file, on the other. These relate to various matters which arose in the domestic, international, constitutional, administrative and economic spheres in this period and thus constitute valuable source material of history. They were in the custody of Miss Maniben Patel, the Sardar's daughter, and were deposited by her with the Navajivan Trust in Ahmedabad after his death.

The Trust arranged, under her direction and supervision, to have them typed in Ahmedabad and send the copies to me for editing and compilation. The volumes are thus based on authentic copies of the correspondence deposited with the Trust.

Explaining the time-lag in releasing the correspondence, Maniben said in a long talk she had with me in New Delhi in 1970 that she had held it back until she was certain that its publication would not be harmful to the nation for which her father had laboured and suffered so much. The letters contain matter relating to Kashmir and other affairs of State and party organization whose untimely disclosure might have embarrassed the ex-Government or the political leaders of the day.

Since, however, some of the correspondence in the possession of other parties and relating to isolated events had been made public, she decided that the time had come to release the entire correspondence to give a balanced picture of the events to which they relate or of the Sardar's views. "I have been late," she said, "but not too late."

The Navajivan Trust, she added, had agreed to publish the correspondence and thus make it possible for the people of India and the world outside to have access to this valuable material which throws new light on the momentous developments of the period covered by these papers and the calculations made

by the leading personalities of the day in shaping the course of history.

Shantilal H. Shah, then a member of the Lok Sabha (Lower House of India's Parliament) and Managing Trustee of the Navajivan Trust, communicated to me the decision of the Trust to assign me the task of editing and compiling the correspondence. He mentioned that the Trustees had been influenced in this decision by the fact that as a political columnist and Joint Editor of the Hindustan Times I had been a witness at close quarters of the activities of Sardar Patel during the period of correspondence and that my recently published memoirs had confirmed them in their view.

As a working journalist I met Sardar Patel first at the Congress session of Ahmedabad in 1921 when, as Chairman of the Reception Committee, he made the briefest speech in the annals of the Congress. I frequently met him thereafter at Congress sessions and at meetings of the Working Committee and the AICC. During 1946-50 when the Sardar stayed in Delhi, I kept almost daily contact with him.

I consulted two old friends who earned distinction as members of the Indian Civil Service and whose judgment I have come to value over the years. They are Shankar Prasada, who as Chief Commissioner of Delhi was in regular contact with Sardar Patel, and C. S. Venkatachar, who had worked as Secretary to the Ministry which dealt with Indian States. Both of them, with their intimate knowledge of contemporary events, encouraged me to undertake the colossal task. I am grateful to Shankar Prasada for having actively advised and assisted me.

Perhaps the most difficult task in handling the correspondence was in arranging the material. Unlike Nehru's Bunch of Old Letters which could be conveniently put together chronologically, the Sardar's letters dealt with men and day-to-day happenings in the governmental, political and administrative fields. Chronology was of course important because it indicated the variety, breadth and depth of the issues which the Sardar handled week after week. At the same time, the material had to be arranged according to subjects, episodes and personalities within the compass of chronology.

The significance of the correspondence lies in the light it sheds on the main characters on the Indian stage as they acted and reacted to the challenges of the time and to the problems posed by their differing approach and outlook. There is indeed

hardly a national or regional issue of consequence in contemporary history the origin of which cannot be traced to the five crucial years.

The Sardar initiated correspondence in four spheres in which he acted as the conscience of the Congress party. One related to the conduct of elections to the Central and provincial legislatures and the Constituent Assembly, including the selection of candidates on the party ticket and the collection and distribution of funds to finance the electoral battle; the second sphere concerned the integration of Princely States into the Indian Union and their democratisation; the third was about the supervision of provincial ministries manned by Congressmen and the control of the administrative machine, especially relating to law and order; and the fourth was concerned with the shaping of the Constitution, especially the chapters on Fundamental Rights and safeguards for the Princes, the Civil Service and the minorities.

On some delicate issues, the Sardar and Nehru exchanged correspondence bordering on acerbity. These included the powers of the Prime Minister vis-a-vis his Cabinet colleagues, the choice of Rajendra Prasad as President of the Constituent Assembly and later of the Indian Republic, and the selection of Purushottam Das Tandon as President of the Congress for its Nasik session in 1950.

Sardar Patel was known to be interested chiefly in internal affairs and the problems of national unity. He differed with Nehru in his basic approach to the Kashmir problem and in his estimate of Sheikh Abdullah. But the correspondence also reveals sharp differences in outlook on India's foreign relations, especially those involving Nepal, Tibet and China.

The Sardar's letters to Lord Wavell and Lord Mountbatten tell the story of his effort to save the Interim Government—and how he repeatedly confronted them with proofs of breaches of the understanding on which the Muslim League was admitted to the Government. The reactions and explanations of the two Viceroys throw interesting light on the inner conflict from which they suffered.

The most significant document is perhaps the long letter—over 10,000 words—which Sardar Patel wrote to the Premiers of the various provinces (as Chief Ministers of States were then called) in his capacity as acting Prime Minister. Nehru used to write a fortnightly personal letter to the Premiers. Patel used

the opportunity presented when the Prime Minister went abroad to spell out what now reads like his will and testament on foreign and domestic affairs and on economic, social and administrative problems confronting the nation then—and to this day.

Another example of what may be described as his will and testament in the sphere of institutional discipline may be quoted. Addressing “a word to Congressmen,” he said: “For long years I have worked as a soldier of the Congress. I still consider myself a soldier though many call me a Sardar. To my fellow-soldiers, I respectfully submit that our only claim to power and authority springs from our having followed Mahatma Gandhi in the fight for India’s freedom. Any further and future claim or honour that we find shall also be through sacrifice for the poor and the downtrodden. Humility is a Congressman’s first requisite because that is the badge of service. Our proper place is not at vantage points of power but at vantage points of service. Who shall be ministers, and where shall state capitals and other things be located are matters for small people to talk and write about. Congressmen will be forced and pushed into seats of power if they are true Congressmen.

“For years I never spoke from a Congress platform. Even now I fear to make a speech, lest some unguarded word of mine should hurt somebody’s feelings or interests. It would be unbefitting a servant. A soldier keeps his feet firmly on the soil. He is not afraid to fall. But those who have risen high risk a fall if they are not careful. Hence those in positions of authority should be watchful day and night. Let Congressmen eschew desire for power. Let able workers be brought forward. If it becomes necessary for us to sit in seats of authority let our hands be clean, our tongues mild, our hearts sound and our vision clear.”

The present and future generations may look to the Sardar’s correspondence for answers to questions such as:

Did Nehru and Patel think and act as statesmen rather than as politicians in handling the daily affairs of the nation and of the party? Did they have a moral yardstick? If they did, was it applied rigorously? Did they place the country above the party and the party above the individual? Did they observe norms of behaviour so as to set an example to their contemporaries and successors? Did they foresee the pattern of life which their own acts would unfold? Did they lay firm foundations for democratic

growth? Did they fashion the political and administrative infrastructure to meet the needs of the challenging times?

Among figures around whom controversies raged were C. Rajagopalachari, K. Kamaraj, T. Prakasam, Rajendra Prasad, Purushottam Das Tandon, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai and Master Tara Singh. The triangle of the power structure, which dealt with issues great and small, was represented by Nehru, Patel and Maulana Azad.

What was the Sardar's style of work and of leadership? An interesting light is thrown on the subject by those who came in close contact with him. Their views are recorded in a separate note entitled 'Focus on Sardar'. These are by Maniben Patel and five members of the ICS: G. S. Venkatachiar, H. M. Patel, H. V. R. Iengar, Shankar Prasada and V. Shankar, and three public men and a journalist, namely, *Jaya Prakash Narayan*, Shriman Narayan, Rasiklal Parikh and B. Shiva Rao.

Gandhi, Nehru, Patel. These three names are inextricably woven into the pattern of Indian history in the great and thrilling years leading up to independence and immediately after. Vallabhbhai, unlike Gandhi and Nehru, was born poor. He was of peasant stock. His early life was a struggle to get educated. A man who matriculated at 22, an age at which other young Indians complete their university studies, and who through laborious self-study qualified as a district pleader, should have normally remained in this station for the rest of his working life. But Vallabhbhai, like his brilliant elder brother Vithalbhai, was not to be satisfied with a pedestrian part in the life of a small town. He thought big. His mind was fired by the desire to develop his latent talents to their full capacity.

The civil disobedience campaign in Bardoli in 1927 was the turning point in Patel's political career. It projected him on the national scene as a man of action, clearheaded and firm of purpose and a trusted lieutenant of Gandhi. The British Raj capitulated in the face of the struggle led by Vallabhbhai and the satyagraha was called off.

This same capacity for effective leadership revealed itself throughout Vallabhbhai's career of public service spread over four decades until his death in December 1950. Whether he was arranging relief for the victims of flood or pestilence or communal violence, or fighting arrogant and overweening British bureaucrats for civic rights or against unjust land taxes, or

marshalling support for mass satyagraha or for Congress candidates in local, provincial or national elections, he showed the same initiative and organisational ability he had successfully displayed as a rebellious schoolboy.

The Sardar gained reputation as an Iron Man because of the manner in which he, as custodian of free India's Home Affairs, brought about and maintained internal stability in the wake of the holocaust that preceded and followed the country's blood-drenched partition. His genius for organisation found full scope in the task of forging national unity by successfully initiating the move for the merger of the Princely States first into unions and later for their absorption into the Indian Union. He also acquired the reputation of an Iron Man as the party boss. Congress members of the various legislative bodies and Pradesh Congress committees were personally known to him and he gave no quarter to those guilty of indiscipline or misbehaviour.

Freedom brought with it new problems. Popularly-elected ministers had to be schooled in their new functions. Bureaucrats had to learn that they no longer served a foreign master but the people of India. The feudal rule of princely India had to be changed to mesh with the needs of a democratic structure responsive to the wishes of the people.

Vallabhbhai Patel emerges from the correspondence as a great organiser and consolidator of modern India. Over 70 when he assumed ministerial office for the first time, he carried on his ailing shoulders the crushing burden of building the political infrastructure of the new India. Death prevented him from completing his task, but what he achieved in four short years endures.

The letters are the bones and sinews of Indian history of a crucial period. To the scholar and researcher, they offer a treasure of source material. To the politician, they should serve as a guide. To the citizen, they provide inspiration.

Nehru and Patel were complementary characters. Nehru was brought up in the Fabian ideology of Sydney and Beatrice Webb which upheld parliamentary democracy as the instrument of human fulfilment. But the moral and ideological aspect of Britain's political life and public postures was like the husk on the inner core of rice. Sardar Patel was interested in the inner core, the British genius for organisation and administration. He understood human psychology and what made the British Raj click.

Nehru understood the spirit of the age, social and economic justice for the underdog. Patel was in tune with the call of history—India's history beset with examples of disintegration when the central authority weakened and intrigue, manoeuvres and selfishness became the motivating force of the elite. Nehru was the idealist dreamer, Patel the stern teacher with a cane hanging on the wall.

The plan of the volumes was settled in consultation with my collaborators. It was decided that the letters be published in chronological order, but that the volumes be so determined as to provide an integrated story of the time. The decision of the British Government to reduce from 50 years to 30 the period of embargo on publishing confidential Cabinet matters and state secrets has provided a fresh stimulus to this exercise. The British documents cover the period 1942-47, when power was transferred to India, and the first four of the proposed ten volumes dealing with confidential papers have already been released. Where the story of the British Raj ends the letters of Sardar Patel pick up the thread and carry it to the end of 1950. The Congress Raj that followed was a continuation of the British Raj in more ways than one. It was not merely a case of peaceful transfer of power from the British to the Congress. It was also a continuation of the moral and administrative values for which Britons stood.

Maniben was the ideal companion—a daughter who, regardless of her own comfort, devotedly served her father and merged her personality with his. Her simplicity, self-effacing life and integrity earned her wide respect. She was virtually her father's shadow and was a close witness to the entire drama, its shadows and its highlights.

A brief chronology of events in the Sardar's life pinpoints the main events of his career, as also an illuminating account by Maniben and five officers of the ICS and four public men on how the Sardar organised his life and functioned as the party boss and Deputy Prime Minister.

The letters are not quite typical of the wit and candour and warmth with which Vallabhbhai spoke to his numerous daily callers. He was at his best in personal dialogue, when he spoke briefly but with great effect. This was because he was a shrewd judge of men and knew how to put his ideas across to them in the most human and telling way.

Sardar Patel believed in the doctrine of finding the right person for a job and trusting him to do it well. The correspondence

unfolds his purpose or communicates his decision and bears the stamp of his thoughts. Some letters are concise, some precise and others verbose, while some have a touch of the pedantic. The Sardar did not waste time on a draft so long as it conveyed the core of his directives.

The changes made in editing the material for publication are limited to introducing uniformity in spelling and to correcting obvious errors in idiom and grammar. Where such amendments need to be identified, they are shown in square brackets in the text.

Arrangements are in chronological order and not by topic. But the letters have been grouped to retain interrelation of events and negotiations. Correspondence of a routine nature has been omitted and a few excisions have been made out of regard for susceptibilities of the persons concerned.

Where an extract or extracts from a letter are published this is indicated by the word 'Extracts' at the top of the letter. The omissions have been effected by the persons entrusted by Maniben Patel and the Navajivan Trust with selecting the material for publication.

In several instances, letters, enclosures and other documents referred to in the published correspondence are not to be found in these volumes. We have not been able to fill these gaps and hope future researchers will be able to do so.

Each volume of the series contains an outline of the contents of the remaining volumes. This should help researchers ascertain at a glance what the whole series contains.

Wavell, Mountbatten, the Indian Princes and other dignitaries to whom letters have been addressed have a string of titles. The full title and address is given only in the first letter addressed to each of them in the volume concerned.

Each volume contains nine to eleven pictures, most of which refer to persons or events mentioned in the text of the volume in question. These illustrations have been obtained from Maniben's collection or from the Photo Libraries of the Press Information Bureau of the Government of India and Army Headquarters in New Delhi, the Janmabhoomi of Bombay and the Times of India group through the courtesy of the heads of these organisations. The Editor wishes to record his appreciation of their help.

He also wishes to express his thanks to Maniben and the Trustees of the Navajivan Trust for their co-operation in every way

in helping to bring this monumental work to fruition. Thanks are due to the staff of the Trust office and Navajivan Press in Ahmedabad, the numerous typists who prepared copies of the thousands of letters and other documents which form the raw material for reconstructing the history of the short but epoch-making period 1945-50, and my colleagues and friends in New Delhi who worked long hours in assembling, classifying and preparing the matter. A short note headed Acknowledgments is given at the end of this volume.

What is published in the ten volumes is not exhaustive. Research and perseverance would undoubtedly yield more source material. The yardstick which the Sardar applied to public life and to political and socio-economic issues was forgotten or ignored by his successors with consequences which became apparent in the confused state of politics in the 1960s. India has entered in the 1970s the most crucial period in the evolution of its polity. The stand taken by the Sardar on various issues and his vision of the road which India should take have acquired a new relevance.

2 Tolstoy Lane
New Delhi 110001
7 April 1974

Durga Das

CHRONOLOGY OF PRINCIPAL EVENTS IN SARDAR'S LIFE

- 1875 Born on 31 October at Nadiad, Kaira district, Gujarat. Fourth son of Jhaverbhai Patel, a farmer of Karamsad in the same district, and Ladbai. Belonged to agricultural caste known as Leuva Patidar. Schooling up to English third standard at Karamsad.
- 1891 English 4th and 5th standards at Petlad, a small town seven miles from Karamsad. Lived in a rented room with four or five other boys, with seven days' ration. Walked from Karamsad to Petlad every week.
- 1893 At the age of 18 married Jhaverba of Gana, a small village three miles from Karamsad.
- 1897 Matriculated from a high school in Nadiad, Kaira district, at 22.
- 1900 Passed District Pleaders' Examination. Studied with books borrowed from friends. Set up independent practice at Godhra, headquarters of Panchmahals district, Gujarat. Contracted bubonic plague from a court nazir whom he nursed when an epidemic broke out in Godhra.
- 1902 Shifted practice to Borsad, where he quickly made a name as a criminal lawyer.
- 1905 Saved enough money to go to England to become a barrister, but postponed departure in deference to the wishes of his elder brother Vithalbhai, who came to know about his plan and wished to go first. Looked after his brother's wife while he was away.
- 1909 Wife Jhaverba died after an operation in Bombay. Received a telegram containing news of her death while arguing a murder case in Borsad, but continued case until hearing was completed. In spite of pressure from friends and relations, refused to marry again.
- 1910 Left for England. Admitted to Middle Temple.
- 1911 Passed preliminary examination with honours, standing first in Equity. Fell ill with a tropical disease unknown in England. Doctors wanted to amputate his leg, but a German

doctor intervened and cured him through an operation which he underwent without chloroform.

1912 Took final examination after sixth term instead of the usual 12. Stood first in first class, winning a prize of £50 and exemption from two terms. Sailed for India the day after convocation.

1913 Reached Bombay on 13 February. Refused post in Judicial Department as a lecturer in Government Law School, Bombay, and left for Ahmedabad, where he established himself as foremost criminal lawyer.

1915 Member, Gujarat Sabha, which was converted into Gujarat Provincial Congress Committee in 1919.

1917 Elected member of Ahmedabad Municipal Board. Election challenged and set aside. Stood in a by-election and was returned unopposed. Mahatma Gandhi, president of the first Gujarat Provincial Conference, appointed an executive committee with Patel as secretary. Impressed by Gandhi's leadership of the agitation against the British indigo planters of Champaran, Bihar.

Conducted agitation against begar (forced labour for Government purposes). Led agitation against the appointment of a British member of the Indian Civil Service as Municipal Commissioner and secured his removal.

As Chairman of the Sanitary and Public Works Committee of Ahmedabad Municipality, stayed on in city when most of the citizens went away during an epidemic of plague. Took a leading role in helping sufferers and enforcing precautionary measures.

1918 Organised famine relief works in Ahmedabad district.

Represented textile mill labour with Gandhi and Shankarlal Banker before a tribunal appointed to hear a dispute between labour and millowners.

Put up a temporary hospital in city with grant from Municipal Board to Gujarat Sabha to combat severe influenza epidemic. Organised no-tax campaign in Kaira district along with Gandhi. During campaign Gandhi said he was testing Patel, adding later that Patel had turned out to be "pure gold."

Helped Gandhi in recruitment drive for British Indian Army. They used to walk together for miles and cook their own food.

- 1919 Chairman, Managing Committee, Ahmedabad Municipal Board.
- Organised movement against Rowlatt Bills designed to strangle movement for self-rule. Led big demonstration march in Ahmedabad on 6 April and addressed public meeting against Bills. Sold publicly Gandhi's proscribed books *Hind Swaraj* and *Sarvodaya*, and published *Satyagraha Patrika* in Gujarati without official declaration or permission. Government took no action.
- Helped local authorities restore peace and order after large-scale disturbances leading to martial law in Ahmedabad after arrest of Gandhi.
- Served with a show-cause notice for cancellation of his sanad (permit to practise law) for participating in a public meeting advocating satyagraha. Case ended with a warning. Refused to pay fine imposed by Government as penalty for riots in city. Sofa attached and auctioned for Rs. 100.
- 1920 Organised campaign of Congress Party in elections to Ahmedabad Municipal Board. Congress captured almost all elected seats. Discarded Western dress and adopted khadi dhoti, kurta and chappals. Burnt all his foreign clothes. Way of life also changed to traditional pattern in Gujarat. Organised a conference of political workers of Gujarat in Ahmedabad and persuaded it to adopt a resolution supporting Gandhi's civil disobedience movement.
- In response to Gandhi's call at Nagpur session of Congress to collect money for Tilak Swaraj Fund, promised to raise Rs. 1 million and enrol 300,000 party members in Gujarat. Fulfilled these promises within three months.
- 1921 Elected chairman of Reception Committee of 36th session of Congress held at Ahmedabad. For first time, delegates sat on floor and the session set new pattern in simplicity, austerity and businesslike proceedings.
- Built a hospital and maternity home on 21 acres of land along Sabarmati river at site of session. The fountain built at that time is still there.
- 1922 Government of Bombay suspended Ahmedabad Municipality after a sharp tussle over supervision of municipal

schools. Organised schools under People's Primary Education Board with public contributions. Municipality suspended. Collected Rs. 1 million for Gujarat Vidyapith in a tour which took him up to Rangoon.

1923 All-India Congress Committee deputed him to conduct satyagraha at Nagpur in connection with British District Commissioner's ban on flying national flag in cantonment area. Resisted Bombay Government's levy of punitive tax on people of Borsad who were charged with harbouring criminals. Tax withdrawn. Called Suba of Borsad.

1924 Ahmedabad Municipality reinstated. Fresh elections gave Congress Party a decisive majority in enlarged Municipal Council. Elected President of municipality.

1927 Passed a resolution giving notice to Ahmedabad Cantonment to pay water tax from 1920 at rate of eight annas. If tax was not paid, threatened to cut off water connection. Tax paid under protest.

Introduced khadi uniform in municipality. Municipal work was conducted in Gujarati after he became President. His scheme for supplying pure water passed.

Completed drainage scheme during term as President. Collected all arrears of municipal tax not paid by high officials, some well-to-do people and municipal councillors by cutting water connections and attaching properties.

Unprecedented rainfall caused great damage and hardship throughout Gujarat. Saved Ahmedabad from floods by getting culverts breached. Organised relief measures for flood sufferers with public contributions. Promoted grow-more food and fodder campaigns and opened shops to sell high-quality gram, cereal and cotton seed for sowing at low cost to farmers. Received more than Rs. 10 million from Government earmarked for famine relief. A new party emerged in Ahmedabad Municipality. Clashed with it over appointment of chief officer.

1928 Resigned presidency. Led peasant agitation in Bardoli taluka, Surat district, against increase in land revenue rates. Bombay Government punished farmers for non-payment by confiscating and auctioning land, crops and other property.

As agitation continued unabated, Government agreed to restore all unsold confiscated land, release satyagrahis, reinstate dismissed village officers and reduce land tax. Named *Sardar of Bardoli* and thereafter known as *Sardar Patel*. Presided over first local self-government conference in Surat.

- 1929 Presided over Maharashtra Political Conference in Poona. Toured Maharashtra, mobilising public opinion against enhanced land taxes and untouchability. Presided over Kathiawar Political Conference at Morvi. Toured Madras Presidency at request of C. Rajagopalachari. Presided over Tamil Nadu Political Conference at Vedaranyam. Reiterated support for Congress resolution on dominion status at conference against supporters of complete independence. Also visited Karnatak and Bihar. At Calcutta session of Congress advocated support to all-party committee headed by Motilal Nehru which recommended acceptance of dominion status as India's political goal, provided demand was granted within two years. Motilal Nehru, Congress President, moved a resolution from chair congratulating Patel and peasants of Bardoli on victory over British bureaucracy. Nominated in September as a candidate for presidency of Congress session at Lahore but withdrew in favour of Jawaharlal Nehru.
- 1930 Arrested on 7 March while addressing a public meeting at Ras village, near Borsad, a few days after Gandhi announced march to Dandi near Surat, to break salt law. Preceded marchers to arrange accommodation and food on way. Sentenced to three months' imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 500 or three weeks' additional imprisonment. Refused to pay fine and lodged in Sabarmati jail, Ahmedabad. Went on hunger-strike in jail, requesting C class diet instead of A class. Request granted. Released on 26 June. Arrested when leading a procession in Bombay on 31 July and sentenced to three month's jail. Taken to Yeravda jail near Poona. On release, made a speech at Khadi Bhandar, for which he was arrested. Sentenced to nine months' imprisonment in the second week of December.
- 1931 Released from jail in March under Gandhi-Irwin Pact. Presided over 46th Congress session at Karachi in last

week of March. Helped Gandhi in his discussions with Viceroy (Lord Irwin) in Simla in last week of August on Congress participation in First Round Table Conference in London.

- 1932 Arrested at 4 a.m. on 4 January and taken by car to Yeravda and imprisoned with Gandhi there for 16 months. Mother died at Karamsad.
- 1933 Transferred to Nasik jail on 1 August. Elder brother Vithalbhair died in Switzerland on 22 October. Rejected terms on which Government offered to release him on parole for two days to perform funeral rites.
- 1934 Developed serious nasal trouble in jail and released on 14 July. Issued statement accepting Gandhi's decision to leave Congress on 24 September. Congress decided at its annual session in Bombay in October to contest elections to Central Legislative Assembly. Undertook tour of many parts of country campaigning for party candidates. British Government allowed Jinnah to go to North-West Frontier. Sardar also sought and obtained permission to do so. But after going there was not allowed to visit Bannu district.
- 1935 Organised relief work in Borsad taluka where plague had broken out in four successive summers. Organised relief for victims of Quetta earthquake from Bombay, where he was laid low with jaundice.
- Sir Roger Lumley, Governor of Bombay, invited Sardar to a meeting and offered him premiership of Bombay Presidency, but added that land confiscated from farmers in Bardoli and sold would not be returned to owners. Sardar replied: "I am not going to be premier and the land will be returned to the peasants."
- President of Third Local Self-Government Conference at Broach.
- 1936 Collected Rs. 49,000 for Harijan Fund in two days in February. Appointed Chairman of Congress Parliamentary Sub-Committee to select party candidates for provincial elections under Government of India Act, 1935.
- 1937 Involved in a controversy with K. F. Nariman, President of Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee, over selection of premier for Bombay Presidency. Guided Congress Ministries after acceptance of office.

- 1938 Involved in July in controversy on a constitutional issue with Dr. N. B. Khare, Prime Minister of Central Provinces. Khare accused Sardar of conspiring to oust him from office and resigned from Government and Congress. Efforts to impose central party discipline on provincial leaders earned him title Dictator of India. Presided over Kathiawar Rajkiya Parishad. Narrowly escaped attempt to kill him. Visit to Mysore city resulted in Government of Mysore State agreeing to flying of Congress flag in its territory. Flew to Rajkot on 24 December for talks with Thakore Saheb of Rajkot, who signed agreement on release of prisoners in Rajkot State and offered Sardar a portfolio in his Council of Ministers.
- 1939 Subhas Chandra Bose defied Gandhi, Patel and other members of the Working Committee and got elected President of the Congress at the Tripuri session defeating Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya.
- Bose's resolution on mass civil disobedience was defeated at the Tripuri session in February. Bose described Sardar as "*shining light of the ruling clique.*" He resigned presidentship disagreeing with a resolution of the Congress, asking him to nominate the Working Committee on the advice of Gandhi. The Working Committee appointed a war sub-committee of three, including Vallabhbhai, in August. Warned provincial Congress organisations not to force a political crisis by hasty action.
- Thakore Saheb of Rajkot broke agreement and satyagraha was renewed in State early in the year.
- 1940 Replied in a public speech at Ahmedabad in October to Sir Samuel Hoare, Secretary of State for the Dominions, who had asked in House of Commons whether India was fit for independence. Sardar said: "If you lose the war, you will have lost everything, and even if you win, you will have suffered so heavily that your victory will be an empty one. At the end of the war, I declare no nation will remain subject to another. A great revolution is going to sweep the people everywhere. We shall see a new world emerge out of the fiery ordeal of this war."
- Arrested under Defence of India Act on 18 November for participating in satyagraha launched by Gandhi to press Britain for firm commitment on Indian independence. Imprisoned in Sabarmati jail and later transferred to Yeravda.

- 1941 Released on 20 August from detention on ground of health. Condemned communal killing in Ahmedabad at first public meeting after release. Treated for acute intestinal disorder.
- 1942 Participated in talks with Sir Stafford Cripps in New Delhi. Favoured acceptance of constitutional proposals put forward by Cripps provided they were modified to suit political conditions in India.
- 1942 Supported Quit India resolution at AICC meeting in Bombay on 8 August. Arrested at 4 a.m. on 9 August under Defence of India Act. Detained without trial at Ahmednagar fort with other Working Committee members.
- 1945 Transferred to Yeravda. Recurrence of intestinal trouble. Released on 15 June.
Went to Simla during political talks between Viceroy (Lord Wavell) and Indian leaders.
Entrusted with organising Congress election campaign for Central and provincial legislatures.
Secured G. V. Mavalankar's election as Speaker of the Central Legislative Assembly in December.
- 1946 Issued call to Ministers in Congress Governments to work for eradication of untouchability.
Disapproved Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's proposal for mass conversion of members of Scheduled Castes to other religions. If they changed religion they could not claim benefits as Harijans.
Persuaded revolting men of Royal Indian Navy to call off agitation in February as "the dawn of freedom is breaking and the sun will rise in a few months."
If political issues between Britain and India could not be solved satisfactorily, India would withdraw from Bretton Woods Conference, Sardar said in a statement in March. Condemned suggestion that sterling balances should be scaled down. "Sterling credit is the economic foundation of India and this country's future progress largely depends upon it."
Opposed Jinnah's demand for Pakistan, saying: "It is a monstrous thing that a man can claim a different nationality because he changes his religion." Hindus and Muslims were all basically Indians and thought as such. Congress

could not accept the theory of Pakistan, happen what may. The two-nation theory would ruin all.

Declared in an exclusive interview with the political correspondent of Reuter that India would be prepared to refer major political issues to an international body for arbitration. Britain could not stay in India indefinitely. "Hand over power either to the Congress or to the Muslim League and go out of India," he said.

Advised withdrawal of trial of leaders of Indian National Army in Delhi.

Pleaded for fuller freedom to legislatures in Princely States and to Praja Mandals to select representatives to Constituent Assembly.

Appealed to Sikhs not to boycott Constituent Assembly even though Cabinet Mission had not done them justice. Rejected possibility of a coalition between Muslim League and Congress.

Joined Viceroy's Executive Council as Home Member on 3 September. Announced in Central Legislative Assembly that foreigners would be appointed to senior administrative posts only in exceptional cases.

Accepted the principle of state control of industry; told Central Legislative Assembly that it was not desirable to go fast on nationalisation.

Spurned Jinnah's proposal for an exchange of population. Urged Muslim League to join Constituent Assembly and abandon its Pakistan policy.

1947 Talks with British Government representatives on transfer of control of services from Secretary of State to Interim Government and compensation for British officials completed. Statement on All India Radio's language policy announcing changes in existing practice.

Rejoinder to Jinnah: "Let an impartial tribunal decide the Pakistan issue, for Pakistan could be attained only on the basis of justice and understanding and not by force of arms."

Appealed to Muslim League to accept invitation to join talks and agree to arbitration by a "free power" in case of agreement between League and Congress.

Told Princes to play their part in shaping India's destiny. Warned North-West Frontier Province Ministry headed by Khan Abdul Qayum Khan that Centre would not submit to rowdism and threats.

Interim Government's proposals on compensation to British officials accepted by Attlee Government. Demanded dominion status for India "at once" so that a strong Centre could deal firmly with threats to law and order. Statement issued on outbreak of riots in Dera Ismail Khan and elsewhere in NWFP.

Rulers of Dholpur, Nabha and Nawanagar told Sardar in New Delhi of their decision to join Constituent Assembly. States Department created and entrusted to Sardar. Described Jinnah's demand for a land corridor linking West Pakistan with the eastern wing as "fantastic nonsense."

Assured Princes that "internal autonomy" of their States would be respected.

Patel Committee's report on minorities submitted to Constituent Assembly. Report recommended joint electorates, representation in Ministries at Centre and in states and other safeguards.

Insisted on stationing a brigade of Indian Army in Kathiawar to protect States acceding to Indian Union from apprehended attack from Junagadh.

Persuaded Government to overrule Mountbatten and entrust Indian Army with operations against Nawab of Junagadh.

Pledged Government protection to Muslims staying in India. Said forced conversions and marriages would not be recognised.

Announced full agreement between India and Pakistan on all outstanding issues relating to partition, including division of armed forces. Said Kashmir had not been referred to Inter-Dominion Partition Committee. Announced in Constituent Assembly financial settlement between India and Pakistan under which India would transfer Rs. 750 million to Pakistan as "a great gesture of goodwill."

Addressed Orissa rulers in Cuttack. They agreed to merge their territories with Orissa province.

Announced at public meeting in Jammu that "everything possible" would be done to save Kashmir, "and this assurance I am conveying on behalf of the Government of India." Praised Sheikh Abdullah's role in ensuring Kashmir's accession to India.

1948 Appealed to labour leaders of West Bengal to support popular Government. Warned Pakistan that if it wanted further division of the country, "let us do it in the open field." Asked Indian Muslims: "In the recent all-India Muslim Conference, why did you not open your mouths on the Kashmir issue? Why did you not condemn the action of Pakistan? These things create doubts in the minds of the people."

Declared in a statement: "Unless the Kashmir issue is settled, the financial pact between India and Pakistan cannot be implemented. . . . Let there be no mistake that Kashmir belongs to India."

Declared at Patna that abolition of zamindari without compensation would be nothing short of robbery.

Appealed to Nizam of Hyderabad to respect his people's wishes and accede to India.

Inaugurating Rajasthan Union, said that only by coming together could smaller States save themselves from anarchy and confusion.

In message on formation of Vindhya Pradesh, said: "Unification and democratisation would be purposeless if they did not bring about improvement in the lot of the people." Warned British politicians and Press to halt propaganda against India. Blamed Churchill for India's partition and attendant disasters.

Rejected compromise on Hyderabad. Accession and responsible government were India's minimum demands.

Said in an eve-of-independence day speech: "In free India there is no room for divided loyalties."

Informed Parliament that "action would be taken against Hyderabad for breach of the Standstill Agreement."

Congratulated Defence Services on their remarkable success in the "police action" in Hyderabad.

Indicted UN for mishandling Kashmir issue. "We accepted the UN Commission's cease-fire proposals, but the other

party did not. We could perform the Kashmir operation without danger if only we could free ourselves from our commitments."

Referring to Pakistan and its anti-Indian propaganda, said: "I wonder whether they are really afraid of us, or is this outburst merely an attempt to preserve their unity?"

Inaugurated Advisory Board of Central India States. Praised Nehru's leadership on his 60th birthday, saying: "Pandit Nehru has led the country through the crisis and has by his great leadership enhanced the prestige of India. We want our leader to remain at the helm for many years."

1949 Announced merger of five Princely States of Rajputana—Bikaner, Jaipur, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur and Udaipur—to form Rajasthan Union and hailed it as a momentous development.

Advised Maharaja of Baroda to merge his State with Bombay.

Challenged contention of Nawab of Bhopal that paramountcy had lapsed with British withdrawal from India.

Warned Communists that if they continued to oppose Government and create danger they would be dealt with severely.

Opposed demand for linguistic states because consolidation of country must precede revision of boundaries.

Appealed to members of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh to join Congress.

Advised South Indians to learn Hindi.

Appealed for public contributions to rebuild Somnath temple in Junagadh.

Announced in Hyderabad that responsible government would be introduced in former Nizam's State only after normalcy was restored.

Warned Master Tara Singh in a speech at Amritsar that he was following suicidal policies.

Advised RSS to concentrate on regenerating Hindu society through constitutional and constructive methods.

Inaugurated Rajasthan State in Jaipur.

Announced take-over of administration of Bhopal State by Centre and congratulated Nawab on his understanding

and self-sacrifice. Declared that welfare of Muslims would be prime concern of State's new administration.

At a public meeting at Indore, warned Congress politicians in newly-formed States unions that he would dissolve ministries and administer unions centrally if they did not stop their petty squabbles and tussles for power.

Told All-India Depressed Classes Leagues' Confederation: "India's independence will not be completed until every Harijan claims, and actually gets, equality of status."

Moving consideration of report of Advisory Committee on Minorities in Constituent Assembly, said: "Minority concessions, though not good in themselves, have to be treated as purely temporary. Minorities should voluntarily agree to abolition of reservations for them in services and legislatures."

Supported grant of privy purses to princes in return for accession to Indian Union.

1950 Warned Pakistan against pushing Hindus out of eastern wing.

Defended in Parliament use of preventive detention to fight terrorism and violence.

Gave details of democratic set-up for Delhi Union Territory.

Appealed at public meeting in Calcutta for fair trial to Nehru-Liaquat Pact on minorities.

Told public meeting at Indore that Congress "is fully behind Nehru." Called for revolution in system of education in address to Gujarat Vidyapith.

Opened newly-constructed building of Navajivan Trust, Ahmedabad. Purse of Rs. 1.5 million presented on behalf of Gujarat on his 75th birthday, which he immediately handed over to President of the Provincial Congress Committee.

Declared that accepting aid from United States did not mean alignment with any power bloc. UNO should be strengthened.

Deplored Chinese intervention in Tibet and use of force against Tibetans.

Fell ill on 15 November. Taken to Bombay on Tuesday 12 December. Died on Friday morning, 15 December.

FOCUS ON SARDAR

By MANIBEN PATEL

[An illuminating picture of Sardar Patel's activities and style of work was provided by his daughter Maniben. What follows are extracts from the information and views given by her to Trevor Driberg and the Editor in New Delhi.]

The Sardar was a man of few words. He wrote very little; he hardly kept any record of his public or party work. He destroyed letters addressed to him after reading them and replied by hand, not keeping copies. But after he was appointed Chairman of the Congress Parliamentary Board in 1934, files relating to its transactions were kept.

When the Sardar fell ill towards the end of the Bardoli satyagraha in 1928, it was suggested that somebody should give him secretarial help. I said: "If someone is to be kept, why not I?" From 1929 until his death, I preserved his correspondence whenever possible. Once, when K. Gopalaswami, political commentator of the Times of India, visited him in his flat on Marine Drive, Bombay, the Sardar called for a letter he had received from C. Rajagopalachari, forgetting that he had torn it up and thrown it in the wastepaper basket. Fortunately, I had collected the pieces. It took me some time to paste them together before passing it on to him. This happened before the Interim Government was formed.

The Sardar travelled second-class by railway before he became a Minister. I would spread his bedding at night and retire to a third-class compartment. But from 1934, when there was much correspondence to attend to even on train journeys and people came to see him at stations, I kept company with him in his second-class compartment. I used to make copies of important letters he wrote in hand, but he would question this, asking why I was taking such trouble and wasting time. I also kept newspaper clippings of important events with which he was associated.

The Sardar read several newspapers and listened to radio news bulletins regularly. This enabled him to keep abreast of developments throughout the country. He also talked to people to get information to supplement other sources.

After 1945, the secretarial functions of the Congress Parliamentary Board were undertaken mainly by Shantilal Shah. The Sardar was undergoing treatment for intestinal trouble at the Nature Cure Clinic, Poona, when he sent for Shantilal Shah from Bombay. Shah, a Congress Socialist, hesitated at first because he did not know what was in store for him. But B. G. Kher (Premier of Bombay) advised him to take up the work. The Sardar told Shah he wanted him to act as his secretary at the Parliamentary Board office located at the headquarters of the Bombay Pradesh Congress Committee.

The Sardar was a very shrewd judge of character. When he met a person for the first time he looked him up and down, and the assessment he made in that process rarely went wrong.

Once when Mathuradas Trikamji, Mayor of Bombay, asked what kind of men he kept round him, the Sardar replied that his was a "juggler's basket." He kept all kinds of people for the single aim of winning India's freedom. He used different people for different purposes. He was fully aware of their weaknesses and drawbacks but exploited their useful qualities.

The Sardar learnt punctuality in his youth when he had to do everything for himself. This experience taught him to save time by doing things according to schedule. This gave him self-reliance and at the same time an appreciation of the difficulties other people encountered. He walked on business errands rather than use transport. This habit served him well in London when he was attending the Inns of Court. He used to walk from his lodgings to the law library, a distance of several miles daily. He could not afford to buy books for study, and was at the library when the librarian opened it and left at closing time every evening.

The visit to England fulfilled two of my father's ambitions. He wanted to see the country from which people had come to conquer India and to qualify as a barrister. He had seen how even mediocre lawyers had been able to build up a large practice because they had been to London to study for the Bar. On his return to Ahmedabad, he established himself as the city's leading criminal lawyer.

When he was a district pleader at Borsad in the early 1900s, there was a British magistrate who kept a mirror in his court to study the faces of witnesses. This made witnesses nervous and the magistrate drew conclusions from their behaviour about their truthfulness. The Sardar thought of a plan to make the officer

behave. He demanded transfer to the district court of a case in which he was appearing before the magistrate. The Sardar presented him with a sealed letter. The magistrate opened the letter and saw his name heading the list of witnesses for the defence. He called the Sardar to his chamber for a talk. The accused was acquitted and the magistrate stopped using the mirror conceding that he had no right to do so. This incident illustrates a facet of my father's character. He had no fear of the British magistracy or administrators.

The Sardar was a man of regular habits and disliked arm-chair politicians. He read about Gandhiji's action in Champaran and was impressed by his methods of organising peasants to resist exploitation and oppression. Mahatma Gandhi was pre-occupied with the agitation in Bihar and wanted somebody who would give up everything and devote all his time to the satyagraha campaign in Kaira district organised as a protest against excessive land revenue. My father volunteered his services, and they were accepted.

Until that time the Sardar wore European dress. He was so fastidious that finding no good laundry in Ahmedabad he got his stiff collars washed in Bombay.

From early youth, the Sardar developed the qualities of leadership and discipline. In later life, these qualities were to help him in organising large groups of people for action. Until the Bardoli movement, he was hardly known outside Gujarat. He did not go out of Gujarat until Gandhi's sentence of imprisonment for six years in 1922, when he went on a fund-raising mission for the Gujarat Vidyapith as far east as Rangoon.

For years in Gujarat, whenever Gandhi addressed a public meeting the Sardar did not speak at it and later, when the Sardar spoke, other Congress leaders did not speak. This is an illustration of the discipline observed by Congressmen at the time. The leader spoke for them and the others showed their loyalty by action.

When Gandhiji started the swadeshi movement and burning of foreign clothes, the Sardar burnt all his European clothes, socks and hats. He never wore any type of headgear, even a khadi cap, after he cast aside his black Banglora cap. From then, he always wore dhoti and kurta and a chaddar on his shoulder, adding only a warm jacket in winter.

The satyagraha in Borsad Taluka, Kaira district, lasted a month. The provincial Government had levied a punitive tax

of eight annas—a large sum at that time—per person on all the inhabitants for the maintenance of the preventive police. Even children were taxed. The campaign succeeded and in this satyagraha he gained the title Suba of Borsad.

Another sphere in which the Sardar helped to raise the morale of the people of the area was connected with the activities of dacoits. People dared not leave their houses after 6 p.m. for fear of dacoits who infested the area. They appealed to the Sardar for help. He agreed, provided they did not allow their houses to be used for keeping stolen property.

In the Bardoli satyagraha, there was one organiser for every big village. The Sardar set out at noon from his headquarters and returned at midnight after visiting many villages. There was only one car, so all the other organisers journeyed on foot or by train or cart. The peasants accepted the Sardar as their unquestioned leader. Every morning he received written reports from each village through volunteer messengers. The title Sardar of Bardoli was conferred on him by a party worker at a public meeting. It gained nationwide currency when Gandhiji started referring to him in this manner.

As head of Ahmedabad Municipality, the Sardar looked far ahead of immediate civic needs and planned accordingly, unlike some of his successors who made changes looking to short-term gains.

His qualities of leadership were recognised when he organised relief measures during the floods that hit Gujarat in 1927. He went round Ahmedabad city with the chief engineer and ordered a culvert to be broken to let the flood waters flow into the Sabarmati river. This saved the city from total inundation. He also persuaded the Bombay Government to provide more than a crore of rupees for relief to the flood victims. He sent help to the Collector of Kaira when the district was cut off from the rest of Gujarat. Only the Collector's bungalow, which stood on a mound, was safe, and all the townfolk had gathered there for safety. The Sardar's men brought food and other necessities.

The Sardar went to Calcutta for the Congress session over which Motilal Nehru presided. Even though his name had become a household word as the hero of Bardoli his physical appearance was not known. The volunteers of the Congress failed to identify him and since he did not carry a ticket he was not admitted to the pandal. The next day he carried his membership card and the volunteers were surprised when they found

people shouting for the darshan of the Sardar of Bardoli and that the hero was the person the volunteers had kept out the previous day.

The Sardar was favoured by the provincial Congress committees as the next party president, but Motilal Nehru wrote to Gandhiji asking that Jawaharlal should succeed him. Motilal wanted to see his son Congress chief before he died. My father agreed with Bapu (Gandhiji) that Motilalji's wish be fulfilled.

It was usual for the Congress President to attend annual sessions with large retinues. The Sardar went to the Karachi session in 1931 with only me and an aide, thus cutting drastically the expenses of the reception committee.

The outlook of the Sardar and of Nehru was vastly different. They agreed to differ, but at the same time worked together for the common cause of India's freedom. The influence of Mridula Sarabhai and Rafi Ahmad Kidwai on Nehru was to a large extent responsible for the rift between my father and Jawaharlal.

The Sardar became the party boss from the time he became head of the Parliamentary Board. He was also the party's main fund-raiser. The Congress High Command, of which he was the mainspring, functioned as a moral prop for the Chief Ministers against the administrative machine directed by the British.

I used to sleep by the telephone to take calls that came at odd hours of the night so that the Sardar's sleep was not disturbed. I took down messages and passed them on to him the next morning. One such call came at midnight from Biswanath Das, then Premier of Orissa. He had decided to resign over the choice of a provincial official to act as Governor. The Sardar backed him and the Viceroy yielded.

I may recall a meeting the Sardar had with Bombay Governor Lumley in 1937 at Lumley's request. It lasted about an hour. Lumley told the Sardar that he would be Premier of Bombay, but the lands confiscated from the peasants of Bardoli would never be returned. The Sardar replied: "Note it down that I am not going to be Premier, and also that the lands will be returned to the peasants."

The Sardar took many unpopular decisions in party and Government matters, but his decisions were accepted because he had no axe to grind. He was not amenable to threats or blackmail. He had no property of his own and he was above

extraneous considerations. He had nothing to lose, had no ambition and no desire to cling to office.

Once in Yeravda jail, Gandhiji asked in good humour what post he would like to hold after Independence. The Sardar replied he would become a sadhu. In 1945, when it had been decided to replace Azad as Congress President, the Sardar got the largest share of votes in the Working Committee. But Kripalani, one of the candidates, withdrew in favour of Nehru and handed a paper to the Sardar to withdraw his nomination as well so that Nehru could be elected unopposed.

Gandhiji, to whom this matter was referred, told Nehru: "I don't want to make you a prop of mine if people don't want you." Nehru kept silent and was selected President. Gandhiji supported Nehru's choice as Prime Minister because he was well known outside India. He compared the Sardar and Nehru to two bullocks yoked to a cart. He felt that if Nehru was made Prime Minister he would be prevented from "making mischief" in the country.

When the Sardar became Home Member and later on Deputy Prime Minister, anybody could call on him during his morning walk from 4.30 to 6.30. He was a fast walker and few could keep pace with him. They told him what they wanted and then they would drop out when the dialogue was over. He gave brief answers and listened mostly. For party workers and others this was an opportunity for opening their hearts to him. At the end of an hour's listening, the Sardar would probably reply in a couple of words. He arranged assistance for even the humblest party worker who needed it. He provided hospitalisation if necessary. After his illness in March 1948 his medical advisers stopped morning walks completely and restricted his interviews.

In 1941, he was afflicted with severe intestinal trouble. He woke around 3.30 every morning because of pain in the bowels. He spent an hour in the toilet before setting out on his morning walk. He had a cup of tea and breakfast, which consisted of a piece of toast and apple juice. In these early morning hours, before going for a walk, I did my quota of spinning. After breakfast, Private Secretary V. Shankar came in with office files. The Sardar looked through the morning newspapers carefully and rarely missed any significant news. He gave oral instructions to Shankar. As before, he would write as little as possible. When in good health, he left home around 9.30 for the

Home Ministry, returned for lunch and after a nap of 15 minutes went to the Information and Broadcasting Ministry.

I looked after the Sardar's Gujarati correspondence while Shankar attended to that in English. I passed on some of the correspondence in Hindi to Shankar. Morarji Desai had recommended Shankar as Private Secretary. The Sardar invited him to lunch to look him over before selecting him for the post.

The Partition Committee set up under the Mountbatten Plan and consisting of as many as 30 to 40 officers, would come to the Sardar's house and stay up to lunch receiving instructions from him. Its members had to report back to him in the evening. Every order he issued had to be executed within 24 hours. He rang up Premiers at night when he had a particular issue to discuss with them. He was against wasting money on telephone calls on matters that were not urgent. I kept a diary of all private trunk calls, for which the Sardar paid out of his own pocket.

I recall another instance of his method of work. There was a crisis in the jute industry. The Sardar phoned C. C. Desai, Commerce Secretary, and M. P. Birla, Chairman of the Indian Jute Manufacturers' Association, Calcutta, and others every night to check on developments. Similarly, at the time of the Bombay riots and disturbances elsewhere, he made phone calls at night to find out what was happening. He made calls to Punjab, Bengal and UP at the time of the partition troubles.

The Sardar was not impolite or arrogant in his dealings with people. He replied promptly to correspondence. He read all the letters addressed to him personally and generally told the officer concerned how he should reply. He never signed letters or any other document blindly. When he was not fully satisfied with a draft, he would change it himself or ask the officer concerned to redraft it. He liked precision and conciseness in letters. He would say that this was "not a place for essays" or for exhibiting one's command of English.

Mountbatten recognised the Sardar's greatness. I was the only other person present when the Sardar had a talk with Bapu between 4 and 5 p.m. on the day of his assassination. Bapu had decided to release the Sardar from the Ministry at the latter's instance, but Mountbatten strongly opposed this because he felt that the Sardar "had his feet on the ground while Nehru had his in the clouds." He told Gandhiji that he could not release the Sardar. Gandhiji agreed and withdrew his decision.

It was agreed at the conversation on January 30 afternoon that Gandhiji, Nehru and the Sardar should sit together and iron out their differences. But this meeting was never held. The Sardar was greatly upset by the slander campaign against him at that time in certain Congress and Government circles. He was worried at heart that Gandhiji had to defend him continually against these slanders.

Previously, when Nehru lived at York Road and the Sardar just across on Aurangzeb Road, they used to meet every day, even though for a few minutes. Nehru would sometimes drop in after lunch, or in the evening or at night after dinner. They walked together and discussed matters. The Sardar would walk with Nehru up to the gate of the latter's house on York Road and see him off there or they would return together to Aurangzeb Road.

These daily meetings and talks cleared misunderstandings, but this dialogue became very difficult after Nehru moved to the house of the former Commander-in-Chief on Teen Murti Marg. If he had not moved there on Mountbatten's advice, much of their later differences might never have developed. Because of his illness, the Sardar was not able to go to Nehru's house frequently.

When there were party matters to be attended to, the Sardar requested the AICC General Secretary to call at his house for instructions. The Working Committee met at the Sardar's residence since there was no good AICC office building at that time in Delhi. The provincial Premiers constantly sought his guidance, and he was a great help to them in their encounters with members of the bureaucracy or party dissidents.

The administrations of the new states formed after integration lacked capable men to guide them. But in those areas where party members had carried out constructive work under the Sardar's direction before independence, such men were available. This was so in Kathiawar and Gujarat. Elsewhere in the country, party workers in the former states had only indulged in agitation and there was no solid foundation for their work.

The Sardar did not aspire to prime ministership or any other high office. He once said that if India had won Swaraj ten years earlier he would have solved the food problem as he had solved that of the states. He added: "But I have not the strength to do so now." He considered food the country's most important problem after consolidation. He was essentially a man of action, averse to writing. His philosophy of life may be summed up

in the words: "Why not create history rather than waste time writing it?"

By C. S. VENKATACHAR (Prime Minister, Jodhpur, 1946-47; Bikaner, 1948-49)

I find people are woolly-headed as to what happened barely 20 to 25 years back. This amnesia of the Indian mind to political and historical happenings is amazing. When I tell some incidents of the India of the Sardar or Nehru in 1946-47, the listener gapes at me and wonders if such things happened! The Indian mind creates a gap and then fills it with myth and mythology of its own. Antidote to this is to pump in recorded printed material.

Civil servants who worked with Vallabhbhai Patel saw in him a political leader so clear-headed, unperturbed, supremely confident; always playing any situation 'cool'; sharp and precise in his instructions or decisions; sparing in words but possessed of a strong will; his preference was to govern by ear, his intuitive actions were conditioned by good listening.

Which of the civil servants round about the Sardar composed his letters is a matter of no importance. It is the working of his political mind that is of historic value. He had an uncanny instinct as to the limits within which the politician acted in making a decision and the area in which the civil servant had to carry it out. In the latter he allowed latitude to the officials in the abnormal period following independence and partition.

The Sardar fascinated me as a born politician. The material which you have released has formed grist to the mill of the politics of 1947-50 and has truly, faithfully and accurately brought out the Bismarckian stature of the Sardar. The letters speak for themselves. Scholars can make use of them for contemporary evidence.

I have been reading 'Wavell—The Viceroy's Journal'. Here are a few of Lord Wavell's estimate of Sardar Patel:

January 19, 1946: *I saw Vallabhbhai Patel for the first time this morning. Not an attractive personality and uncompromising, but more of a man than most of the Indian politicians I have met. . . . He was polite and certainly quite friendly as I expected but obviously uncompromising.*

May 6, 1946 (Simla Conference): *. . . Patel also in khadi but wearing it more like a Roman toga and with a rather Roman face, powerful, clever, uncompromising, very seldom speaking but listening with obvious disapproval.*

July 1, 1946 (in a note recorded after the failure of the Cabinet Mission): . . . Patel is more like a leader than any of them and might become the easiest to do business with.

November 12, 1946: On the whole I get on well with Patel, we speak our minds to each other without reservation, and he has more balance than Nehru. . . .

March 17, 1947: . . . Patel was very friendly at the finish and we have always dealt on frank terms and have respected one another. . . . He is more of a man than most of these Hindu politicians.

In a Letter to the King: Patel is the recognised 'tough' of the Congress Working Committee and by far the most forcible character amongst them.

I have good deal more respect for him than for most of the Congress leaders. . . .

Wavell was a good man. When he received Attlee's letter by a special messenger, dismissing Wavell with a month's notice from his high office, the entry is characteristic of Wavell: "Not very courteously done."

By H. M. PATEL (Defence Secretary, 1948-50)

Sardar Patel was a great administrator and a great leader of men. The two, in fact, go together. He had confidence in himself and was therefore able to inspire and instil confidence in those around him. Because of his self-confidence, he found no difficulty in delegating responsibility. And characteristically, once he delegated responsibility to anyone, he reposed full confidence in him until he proved himself unworthy of it.

He expected those whom he entrusted with responsibility to exercise the discretionary powers vested in them to the full, and he left them in no doubt that he would back them to the full, accepting responsibility himself if anything went wrong and giving full credit to them when things went well. The result, as was only to be expected, was that he received efficient and loyal service. Of course, he was able to do all this because he had the other complementary ability to select the right men for the task in hand.

The Sardar sought always to select the best man for the task to be discharged. When he appointed Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar chairman of one of the more important commissions, many asked him why his choice had fallen on one who

had only a little while before sought to establish Travancore as an independent sovereign State. His reply took the form of a question: "Do you agree that C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar is eminently suited for this work?" The answer could only be in the affirmative. The Sardar then asked: "Was there any reason why the country should deprive itself of the services of one of its most able and distinguished sons? Do you think I am not competent enough to disregard any of his recommendations which I find not to be in the best interest of the country?" It will be seen that confidence in himself enabled him to take the right decision in the interest of the country.

The Sardar also had yet another quality essential in a good administrator. This was a sense of fairness. The fact that he had the power to impose his decisions did not ever tempt him to ignore fair play. While he readily agreed to give an assurance on behalf of the Congress to the British Government regarding the service conditions of the Indian members of the Civil Service, because it appeared to him to be the fair thing to do, he refused to agree to Indians being given the same option as the British members of resigning. While it was understandable that the British members wished to withdraw upon Independence, he could see no reason whatever for an Indian to do so, particularly when he was given an assurance regarding his terms and conditions of service.

Few today recollect that when the Sardar passed away civil servants of all services assembled in the Central Hall of Parliament under the chairmanship of Girja Shankar Bajpai not only to pay him tribute but to pledge their devoted services to the country as a token of gratitude for the trust and confidence he had reposed in them. How did he win this unique affection and confidence? One illustration may perhaps explain.

When partition was decided on, and the task of partitioning of assets and liabilities of the country and its administrative and other organisations was taken in hand, the Sardar invited some 40 or 50 Indian officers who had been appointed to the various committees set up by the Partition Council of the Cabinet working through a Steering Committee of two, Mohammad Ali on behalf of Pakistan and myself on behalf of India.

The Sardar spoke somewhat in the following terms: "I have invited you all today to say just this. You are being entrusted work of the greatest importance to our country. It has to be completed in a very short period of time. I have no doubt you

will apply yourself to the task with zeal and accomplish it with thoroughness and fairness. Let me tell you that I have always been happiest when I have been engaged in working for the country. I am inviting you to join me today and participate in the same happiness."

He won the hearts of all by those very simple words. He was treating them as loyal Indians as anxious to work for the country as any Congressman. It is therefore not a wonder that not one of the decisions taken by the Partition Council has ever been questioned by either side as unfair.

By H. V. R. IENGAR (Secretary, Home Affairs, 1948-50)

The Sardar expected work to be brought in and the files on which his orders were required explained to him. He did not regard it as necessary to go through the correspondence. He wanted to know what the issue on which the Secretary wanted a decision was and the pros and cons of the issue. Thereupon, he would either immediately give an answer, or if the issue required some further consideration by somebody else he would postpone a decision. That was only on complicated matters. Then he would consult the other people concerned and would send for you and give you his decision.

I would say that his principal method of work was that he appointed an officer in whom he had confidence and gave him his trust. He had, of course, his own sources of finding out whether the official really deserved his confidence. But when he gave his complete confidence he relied on him and never let him down.

I usually called on the Sardar at his house on Aurangzeb Road at three in the afternoon, after he had had his post-lunch rest. One day I was with him in his bedroom discussing official business when Maniben entered the room in a hurry and announced in Gujarati that the Maharaja of Patiala, Raj Pramukh of the Patiala and East Punjab States Union, had arrived. As he had not made an appointment, I assumed that the visit concerned some important matter and, rising, told the Sardar that I would wait outside while he talked with the Maharaja.

The Sardar shook his head and replied: "It is to you I have given an appointment, not him. Sit down." He then asked his daughter to invite the Maharaja to enter. As soon as he came in, he greeted him and, pointing to a chair some distance from him, said: "Maharaja Sahib, please sit down there." He next

turned to me and said: "Go on, Jengar." I completed my work in about ten minutes and rose. The Sardar asked: "Have you finished." I replied: "Yes, sir." The Sardar said: "All right," and pointing to a chair near the bed he was lying on, added: "Come here, Maharaja Sahib."

By SHANKAR PRASADA (Secretary, Kashmir Affairs, 1958-65)

I came into contact with Sardar Patel first as District Officer, Meerut (UP) during the 1946 Congress session held there at a time of great communal tension and trouble. Later, as Chief Commissioner, successively of Ajmer-Merwara and of Delhi, I had the privilege of almost continuous contact with him till his death.

I found that the Sardar, though stern in appearance, soon put all at ease through unfailing courtesy, simplicity and good humour. He was a good listener, digesting a brief easily and disposing of business quickly. It took me time to discover that silence with him implied assent and speech dissent. In other words, he was remarkable for achieving the maximum results with the minimum effort.

Perhaps the most outstanding trait in Sardar Patel which came into evidence soon after assuming office was his capacity to command the allegiance and unstinted loyalty of the Civil Servants who came into contact with him. This he ensured by respecting their allotted sphere of authority, extending to them discriminating support and in general allowing them their head to reach the goals he had set. Confidence begets confidence and no wonder that the Sardar got out of men more than most.

It seems to me that no correspondence, however diverse and voluminous, can do full justice to the personality of one who relied so much on the spoken in preference to the written word. Nevertheless, whenever the Sardar chose to communicate by letter, the instructions were clear and precise and based on a discoverable principle of public policy.

It is given to few to intervene as and when required and yet be able to do it so well as to carry conviction on the other side as well. This is only possible when the Civil Service machine as a whole and its important components are treated as partners in business, maybe junior partners, but all the same equally entitled to consideration and respect. That Sardar Patel, new to official machinery, recognised instinctively these principles as basic to good administration so early on assuming office shows that some men are born to lead and others to follow.

By V. SHANKAR (Private Secretary to Sardar Patel, 1947-50)

[Extracts from articles written by Mr. V. Shankar for the publication brought out on the occasion of Sardar Patel Jayanti Samaroh celebrated by the Delhi Citizens' Council on 31 October 1970 and 31 October 1972]

As Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee of the Congress, the Sardar had demonstrated how party discipline had to be enforced when he dealt with the Khare episode in the Central Provinces and the Nariman episode in Bombay. He maintained that iron discipline throughout the first and second spells of Congress Ministries during the British regime. Even after Independence he strove to continue the same tradition. In the process he disciplined himself. Neither Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, who was elected Congress President in 1948 against his wishes, nor Mr. Bhim Sen Sachar who temporarily ousted Dr. Gopichand Bhargava about the same period, could claim lack of co-operation from the Sardar. Dr. Prafulla Ghosh who was for some time Chief Minister, West Bengal, also received full co-operation from him as long as he was Chief Minister. There was no centrally-sponsored attempt to topple any of these persons. When they fell, they fell on their own account. When the Socialists carried their dissent too far in the Congress and when in UP Mr. (R. A.) Kidwai's group followed the same example, the Sardar did not hesitate to bring about their exit.

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It was acting on these principles and policies that in the years 1947-50, the problems that confronted the country in the critical years after Independence were made to look comparatively easy of solution. The reason was that hard realism, conviction, determination and patriotism ran through thought, conduct and behaviour between which there was an enviable harmony. It was a liberal education to see that great man with a massive mind and practical commonsense reduces complications to simplicities, idealism to realism, vagueness to definiteness, vacillation to determination and fickle-mindedness to resolution.

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In popular mind the role of founding fathers of our Independence has been assigned to Gandhiji, Pandit Nehru and the Sardar. Gandhiji's role as the spiritual leader, inspirer and Supreme Commander of the struggle notwithstanding the vicissitudes through which it passed is a class by itself. Pandit Nehru as the popular idol who ruled the hearts of millions was the torch-bearer of that struggle. The Sardar, however, conquered

the minds of the people and provided the fuel for that majestic light. It is this perfect combination of the triumvirate which in the short span of 25 years completely changed the outlook and brought to its knees, through a non-violent struggle, the mighty British Empire, over which the Sun reportedly never set. To my mind, however, during the last phase among this triumvirate the dominating figure was that of the Sardar.

By JAYA PRAKASH NARAYAN, Sarvodaya leader

[Extracts from the speech of Mr. Jaya Prakash Narayan which he had written out in Hindi for the celebration on 31 October 1971 but which abruptly ended as the siren for a practice black-out was sounded]

The text of J. P.'s speech was published in the Independence Day issue of the fortnightly magazine *The States of New Delhi* in August 1972. The English version of the speech has been authenticated by J. P. himself. He said; "Pandit Prakash Veenji recalled how on a similar occasion Rajaji unburdened his heart by publicly confessing to a wrong he had once done the Sardar. Well, I find myself in the same situation; the dominant feeling within me today is one of self-reproachment, because during his life time I was not merely a critic but an opponent of the great Sardar. For his leadership in the struggle for independence I had great admiration and respect. And yet we Congress Socialists, who wished to see India take to the path of socialism, considered the Sardar a reactionary who was and would remain a defender and supporter of capitalism.

"The Sardar's reason for displeasure with us was that as a Marxist I criticised Gandhiji's views and opposed them although I must say that I respected him to the point of reverence. . . . After independence the adroitness with which the Sardar integrated the various Princely States with India, peacefully and with the consent of rulers, was something unique. No other leader but the Sardar could have pulled off the feat. . . . The Kashmir issue alone was somehow left to Pandit Nehru, which proved to be unfortunate for the nation. Because of Panditji's mishandling, the issue is no longer our internal affair but is smouldering as a controversy in the U.N. and its Security Council and Pakistan rakes it up every now and then. Many a veteran leader in the country maintains that had the matter been handled by the Sardar (and it fell within his domain) he would have found a satisfactory solution, and thus

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prevented its becoming a perennial headache for us and a cause of bitterness and animosity between India and Pakistan.

“ . . . I had been told that Jawaharlalji was considered an expert on foreign affairs in Congress circles. But two or three years ago I read in K. M. Munshi's Bhavan's Journal a letter that the Sardar had written to Jawaharlalji in connection with Tibet and it forcefully brought home to me the man's greatness. I was struck by Patel's matchless mastery even of subjects in which he was not considered an expert. Looking back at the history of the past few years I am convinced that had Jawaharlalji heeded the Sardar's advice, China would not have become the menace to us that it is. . . . So long as the reins of the country were in the iron hands of the Sardar the progressives, viz. the Socialists and Communists, as also the Leftists in the Congress all complained that Patel made it impossible for Nehru to change the economic and social structure of the country. This I learnt from some responsible ministers. But with the passing away of the Sardar, Nehru had 13-14 years to prove himself. But apart from some verbal changes in the professed aims of the Congress, little progress was made towards socialism, as is plain for everybody to see. The rich have become richer and poor poorer and unemployment has mounted. Those who had voluntarily suffered privation and spent their youth behind bars succumbed to the lure of power and a life of ease and comfort.”

By SHRIMAN NARAYAN

[Extracts from the remarks by Shri Shriman Narayan, Governor of Gujarat, and Chancellor of Gujarat University, presiding at the last of the two Sardar Patel Memorial lectures delivered by Mr. Durga Das (See Appendix, p. 477) on “Patel as a Statesman” on 21 November 1972, at Ahmedabad under the auspices of Vallabhbhai Patel University and Gujarat University]

. . . I have no doubt in my mind that as time passes, Sardar Patel will emerge not only as a leader of Gujarat or of India but as a great statesman of the world. His experience, his way of working and organising parties and running a government should be a lesson not only to India but to many other countries, especially in Asia, Africa and Latin America, developing countries which are trying to experiment with democracy. He was a great democrat, a great politician and statesman and I think there is no parallel in world history to the method and

the promptness with which he integrated 600 and odd States. I call it a marvel of statesmanship. Whatever history I have read, I do not find any example in any country in which this was achieved without bloodshed, through persuasion and through agreement. This will, therefore, be regarded in world history as an unparalleled example of statesmanship and I am very happy that the Navajivan Publishing House is printing these ten volumes which, I fully agree with Durga Dasji, should be read by every politician and person who is interested in politics—by all students of politics. I am also very happy that the Union Government has decided to constitute a National Sardar Patel Centenary Committee. It is but appropriate that his centenary after three years should be celebrated throughout India with enthusiasm, and I do hope that steps will be taken very soon to set up the committee. I recall that when I had suggested about setting up the Gandhi Centenary Committee five years earlier, a number of persons whispered to me that it was too early. But, ultimately, it was found that those five years were not adequate to make the preparations. If we are to do it really in a thorough manner, I feel that such a committee should be set up very soon so that a detailed programme of celebrations, not merely speeches, but his method of working, the basic principles to which he adhered and all other things, is drawn up carefully. I expect that in Gujarat this will be done on a wide scale. Although that committee will be at the central level, I think the Gujarat Government and non-officials should also set up a committee very soon so that appropriate steps are taken well in time.

By RASIKLAL PARIKH (M.P.)

I had joined the 1930 struggle and was continuously in active life except for small periods when I went to the university for completing my studies. In August 1937, I had returned to India after completing my degree course at London University. I was to go back to London in 1938 for my final law examination. Just at that time the struggle for responsible government started in Rajkot State. Dhebarbhai and his colleagues were arrested and sent to jail. After a protest meeting in Jinnah Hall in Bombay against Rajkot State's repression the Sardar sent for me and asked if I would agree to go to Rajkot and be in charge of the conduct of the struggle. This meant that I was to give up my study of law in England. I told him that whatever he asked me to do I would do. On his ins-

tructions, I went to Rajkot. There at the end of the day's programme of direct action I used to ring him up every evening and give him the account of the events and outline of the next day's programme. He never questioned our action at any time on any score and I was surprised to see that the Sardar whose name inspired fear was so trusting. He did not interfere with our initiative. His response or reaction on the 'phone always was "Han thik hai" (it is all right).

In 1945, I was thinking of doing some income-earning work so that I was less of a burden to my elder brother who was bearing the financial brunt of my living and public activities. I mentioned this to Dhebarbhai who very astutely suggested that that would amount to my withdrawing partly from public life, and that I should mention this to the Sardar and should not do it without seeking his blessings. Dhebarbhai and I went to Bombay to meet Sardar Sahib. When I mentioned to him my intention of joining some business and that I would, therefore, be doing only part-time work in the organisation, he kept quiet. When I told him that I had come to him for his consent, he said: "Look Rasiklal, when you first joined the struggle I had felt happy that there has been one addition to our army of fakirs. The fakirs feel happy when someone joins them as a fakir, but it is not the custom of a fakir to agree to a fakir leaving the order. So, if you want to go, you may go; there is never a question of my consent." On the spur of the moment and touched by his sentiments I said: "I won't go if I have not your blessings," and my break from active political struggle was just thwarted.

The Maharaja of Bhavnagar, who was made the Governor of Madras, used to tell me that whenever he had the occasion of meeting Sardar Patel he always felt he met his own father—that was the feeling the Sardar inspired in him. I think that was the experience of many persons who came in touch with him as a leader. His approach was to pat the small worker on his back for the sincere work he did.

By B. SHIVA RAO, Journalist

[Extracts from an article published in the Souvenir issued by the Sardar Patel Jayanti Samaroh Celebration Committee of the Citizens' Council of Delhi on 31 October 1972 at a meeting presided over by Defence Minister Jagjivan Ram at the Red Fort, Delhi]

Among the personalities who moulded India's Constitution and, even more important, its structure, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

was unique and outstanding. His work in the Constituent Assembly was mainly in its committees and often behind the scenes. In membership, the Congress party dominated the Assembly. But the most noteworthy feature of the discussions in the Assembly was their non-partisan character.

It was recognised from the start that Congressmen who had led India's freedom movement, and who unquestionably had enjoyed the confidence of the vast masses of the people were not experts in constitution-making. It was this recognition that brought about the inclusion of a body of eminent and experienced men in the field to participate in the labours of the Assembly and facilitate the preparation of a draft of a Constitution generally acceptable. A small incident relating to the composition of the Drafting Committee may be recalled with interest. A member of the Congress Party asked the Sardar with a sense of grievance: "Why was Dr. Ambedkar, who had been a bitter critic of Gandhiji and an opponent of the Congress Party, chosen to be the Chairman of the Drafting Committee?" The Sardar's reply was characteristic, "What do you know of constitution-making?" he asked, and added, "We have chosen the best man for the job." Dr. Ambedkar acknowledged the help derived from the working of the Party in the Assembly:

"The task of the Drafting Committee would have been a very difficult one if this Constituent Assembly had been merely a motley crowd, in which each member or each group was a law unto itself. There would have been nothing but chaos. This possibility of chaos was reduced to nil by the existence of the Congress Party inside the Assembly which brought into its proceedings a sense of order and discipline. It is because of the discipline of the Congress Party that the Drafting Committee was able to pilot the Constitution in the Assembly with the sure knowledge of the fate of each article and each amendment."

The man who brought about this sense of discipline in the party, of which Dr. Ambedkar spoke with such admiration, was of course Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

A group of people in the party had taken considerable pains to scrutinize and analyse with meticulous care every clause in the draft, involving detailed discussions in the party meetings. Some members sought with great zeal the incorporation of a particular doctrine or cliché in the Constitution. Whenever the Drafting Committee found it difficult to convince a member or a group

of members in the party—and such occasions, were many—of its considered view on a particular question, a meeting was usually arranged at the residence of the Sardar and the differences were quickly resolved.

Sardar Patel was chairman of one of the most important committees of the Constituent Assembly, namely, the Advisory Committee on Minorities and Fundamental Rights. Another committee of which he was chairman was the committee to determine the principles of the Provincial Constitution. It worked in close collaboration with the committee on the principles of the Union Constitution, of which Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was the chairman. It was through these two committees that the firm foundations of a united India with a strong Centre emerged. Yet another important part of the Constitution which bore the stamp of the Sardar's wise outlook related to the provisions regarding the Services.

On the question of the integrity of the country, the Sardar was uncompromising. He would not tolerate any form of divisive forces being encouraged; the role of the Sardar in integrating the 500 odd princely States with the rest of India is today too well known to need reiteration. It was remarkable how a single individual so forthright could achieve such a task with hardly any rancour or distrust in the minds of those who surrendered their rights. The Sardar himself called it "a bloodless revolution which, within a remarkably short period, has transformed the internal and external set-up of the States."

Pondering over the events since Independence, one cannot help regretting the tragedy of Sardar Patel's passing away so soon after our Republic came into being. The work of consolidating India had only just begun. There were not many leaders like him with such a total dedication and commitment to a cause. He left no one in any doubt as to what his views were in any situation or on any issue that confronted the country. He had no time to waste on unnecessary or theoretical discussion and debates. His forthright manner was often misunderstood; but he was a realist to the core and the goal he had set for himself and before the country was of a strong and united nation. No one among the leaders who were at the helm of affairs at a crucial period in our history had Sardar Patel's vision and his rare capacity for wise compromise.

OUTLINE OF I-X VOLUMES

MAIN TOPICS

KASHMIR PROBLEM

1945-46

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Working of Constituent Assembly and its parliamentary aspects
Interim Government and its working

Negotiations with Indian States—their place in future set-up
Bretton Woods Conference and other international conferences
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Provincial politics—Assam, Bengal, Bihar, Bombay, Central
Provinces, Madras, Orissa, North-West Frontier Province,
Sind and United Provinces.

1947

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- (i) Interim Union Government
 - (a) Before 15 August 1947
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- (ii) External
 - (a) Ambassadorial appointments
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Communal flare-up
Refugee problem

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Hyderabad
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Indian States

- (a) Accession
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HIGHLIGHTS—VOLUMES I-IX

VOL. I : NEW LIGHT ON KASHMIR

This absorbing inside story of the events leading up to Independence and continuing subsequently till Sardar Patel's death in 1950 has not been told before. It contains the basic raw material for the research scholar and the historian. The correspondence published in this series opens with the efforts of Maharaja Hari Singh and his counsellors in Srinagar to shore up the feudal structure in Jammu and Kashmir by denial of democratic rights.

The Maharaja unleashed a campaign of repression against the National Conference, the political mouthpiece of the State people, arrested Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, its chief, and charged him with sedition. Jawaharlal Nehru entered Kashmir in defiance of the state Government's ban and courted arrest.

The Maharaja, finding that his hands were forced by the invasion of the State from Pakistan by armed "raiders," opted for India and, after signing the instrument of accession, agreed to the formation of a popular government under Sheikh Abdullah. The Maharaja and the Sheikh were soon at loggerheads. The Maharaja, under relentless pressure from New Delhi, surrendered power and placed himself in the hands of the Sardar who, as the correspondence reveals, played a crucial role in the negotiations which led ultimately to the withdrawal of the Maharaja from the State and the succession of his heir, Yuvraj Karan Singh, as regent and finally as constitutional head of the State.

Patel also pointed out how India's case on Kashmir before the United Nations Security Council should have been effectively presented. The exchange of letters between him and the Sheikh foreshadows the strong differences on approach to the Kashmir problem which ultimately led to the Sheikh's removal from the prime ministership of the State in 1953. Abdullah went his own way, heedless of Patel's restraining influence.

VOL. II : ELECTIONS TO CENTRAL & PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURES—DIRECTION OF CONGRESS CAMPAIGN

Soon after the Congress leaders were released from detention in 1944, negotiations opened with the representatives of the British Raj in New Delhi and the leaders of other Indian political

parties, notably the Muslim League, on new constitutional arrangements to suit the change in the political climate brought about by World War II and to satisfy the aspirations of the Indian people for freedom.

Patel's guiding hand was evident in these negotiations as well as in the direction and management of the Congress campaign for the elections to the Central and provincial legislatures under the Government of India Act of 1935. These elections, based on communal electorates with a restricted franchise, were an acid test of the Congress claim to represent the Indian people and to be the recipient of power on their behalf when the British relinquished their authority. The Muslim League, through Mohammed Ali Jinnah, contested this claim, asserting that it was the sole champion of the Muslim "nation" which aspired to a separate existence on the advent of Independence.

Patel's role as chief of staff of the Congress High Command, indefatigably marshalling manpower and finances and selection of suitable candidates for the big electoral battle, comes out strikingly in the correspondence in this volume.

VOL. III : GUIDANCE TO MINISTRIES—CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY
PROBLEMS—INTERIM GOVERNMENT DEADLOCK—REFORMS
IN INDIAN STATES

Elections to the Central and Provincial Assemblies were followed by the formation of a board consisting of Maulana Azad, Sardar Patel and Dr. Rajendra Prasad to organise elections to the Constituent Assembly as proposed under the Cabinet Mission plan, aiding and guiding Provincial Congress Ministries, including the Coalition Ministry in the Punjab, and supervising the working of the Congress party in the Central Assembly. These tasks fell primarily on the shoulders of Sardar Patel, who functioned as a one-man High Command.

The political situation was complicated by several factors. The Governor of Sind, Sir Francis Mudie, manoeuvred to put the Muslim League in power. Direct Action Day, observed by the Muslim League on 16 August 1946, resulted in unprecedented communal carnage in Calcutta. There were riots in Bihar. The League refused to agree to the Cabinet Mission plan. Mahatma Gandhi's meetings with Lord Wavell failed to straighten matters. Patel attributed the deadlock over the formation of an Interim Coalition Government to bungling by the Viceroy.

An Interim Government, headed by Nehru and consisting of Congress party nominees, was formed on 2 September 1946. It was enlarged into a Congress-League coalition in the middle of October 1946. Soon after, Patel described the coalition, which was functioning without joint responsibility, as an arena of party politics and intrigue. He repeatedly drew Wavell's attention to the disruptionist role of the League members of the Government. He also tried to persuade him to bring Bengal under virtual martial law to restore peace and tranquillity. Problems of Indian National Army personnel, the Royal Indian Navy uprising, creation of the International Monetary Fund, shipping, trade, and the Secretary of State's Services were firmly and constructively handled by the Sardar.

The movement for reform in the Indian States sponsored by Praja Mandals received an impetus from political developments in British India. The meagre hope of success is revealed in a note Nehru forwarded to the Sardar of his talks with the Nawab of Bhopal in early April 1946. The Sardar, however, guided the movement into the right channel. The correspondence reveals the country in the throes of revolutionary change.

VOL. IV : TRANSFER OF POWER—COMMUNAL HOLOCAUST AND PARTITION—ADMINISTRATION AND STABILITY

The political deadlock dragged on from 1946 to 1947. All efforts of the Congress to avert partition failed as the League, instigated by sympathisers in the top echelons of the British bureaucracy in India and Britain, stuck out for Pakistan. Finally, the Congress capitulated under heavy pressure and the twin states of secular, democratic India and Islamic, autocratic Pakistan were born, with Governor-General Mountbatten playing the role of midwife.

Partition and transfer of power were accompanied by the tragedy and turmoil of wholesale uprooting of populations, mass murder and looting and other acts of barbarity. The entire socio-economic structure of the affected provinces seemed on the verge of collapse. How the problem of restoring peace and sanity and resettling the uprooted and dispossessed victims of the trauma of partition was handled, primarily by Patel, with courage and firmness, is revealed in the correspondence.

While the Attlee Government in London and Mountbatten in New Delhi appeared to play fair by the Congress and the Indian people, British administrators continued to play politics at

the lower levels and were instrumental in pushing Pakistan into a military adventure in Kashmir as part of their game to weaken India economically and politically. The Muslim League, which had grabbed power in Pakistan, eagerly collaborated in this game.

VOL. V : CONTROL OVER CONGRESS MINISTRIES—
INDIAN STATES' ACCESSION

Creating conditions for stable government and maintaining law and order in the old provinces of British India after the disruption of partition was a major problem which was Patel's prime responsibility as Minister of Home Affairs. Relations between governors and chief ministers had to be redefined in the changed political context, and the Sardar was often called upon to mediate in disputes resulting from conflicting interpretations of rules and practices by those in authority.

Problems also arose from the emergence of factionalism in the provincial Congress organisations, and the Sardar had to exert his authority to prevent them from cracking up in the heat of local power struggles. The most notable instance was in Madras, where two rival factions were engaged in a bitter struggle which resulted in the ouster of Chief Minister T. Prakasam.

Rehabilitation of Hindu and Sikh refugees from West Pakistan was the key problem encountered in East Punjab, together with the intransigence of Master Tara Singh and the Akali Dal. In Assam, large-scale infiltration of Muslims created difficulties for the provincial administration in the wake of the loss of Sylhet district to Pakistan. The inclusion of the tribal hill tracts in the province also presented difficulties as the hillsmen, ethnically and culturally different from the dwellers in the Brahmaputra Valley, wanted a separate identity. In the interests of national security in a very sensitive region, they were brought together under one administration.

Bringing the conglomeration of princely States within the ambit of the new integrated nation-state that Congress leaders envisaged after freedom also presented many problems, the solution of which rested on Patel's shoulders as Minister of States.

VOL VI : PATEL-NEHRU DIFFERENCES—ASSASSINATION OF GANDHI—
SERVICES REORGANISED—REFUGEE REHABILITATION

Sardar Patel and Jawaharlal Nehru came to the brink of relinquishing office in each other's favour over differences, first arising out of communal disturbances in Ajmer-Merwara and later

snowballing into serious conflict over the definition of the functions of the Prime Minister in relation to his colleagues and the preparation of memoranda by both for presentation to Gandhi for his adjudication. The assassination of Gandhi at this crucial period acted, however, as a cementing bond between them. The Rashtriya Sawyamsevak Sangh and similar organisations were banned.

G. Rajagopalachari was brought to the Centre as Governor-General in succession to Mountbatten. Restoring popular confidence after the Gandhi murder and curbing the extremist elements responsible for it without at the same time causing civil strife was the responsibility of Patel. The correspondence between Nehru and Patel on this subject reveals the different styles with which they functioned. Throughout the year, the influx of fresh waves of refugees and their rehabilitation continued to be a major pre-occupation of the government, and it was Patel's lot to co-ordinate these tasks.

The difficulties encountered in providing cohesive and effective administrations in the provinces called for firm directives from Patel. In the United Provinces, the major conflict was between the veteran Congress leader Purushottam Das Tandon and Premier Pant and their political adversary Rafi Ahmad Kidwai. This was represented in the Press as a struggle between supporters of Patel and Nehru and a reflection of a power tussle at a higher level. Sharp differences arose in Assam between Governor Akbar Hydari and Chief Minister Gopinath Bardoloi, while Communist activities became a cause of worry in this province and in neighbouring West Bengal.

VOL. VII : INTEGRATING INDIAN STATES—POLICE ACTION IN HYDERABAD

The year 1948 was significant for the introduction of responsible government in many princely States, and also for the attempts of some princes to block this process. *Integration talks were launched* and new groupings of States came into existence with popular ministers to run them. Not long after their induction, Patel was called upon to deal with the squabbles within these governments as well as between them and the princely heads of the new unions.

The papers relating to the States of Hyderabad and Junagadh have been brought together, for their case stands apart from that of

the other States which voluntarily merged in the Indian Union as a result of the patriotic impulse of their rulers, who read the signs of the times. While the ruler of Junagadh fled to Pakistan, the Nizam dreamt of carving out an independent State in the belly of the Indian Union.

With this end in view, the Nizam's agents went on an arms buying spree in Europe and organised bands of thugs to terrorise the predominantly Hindu population of his State. Secret negotiations were also started with the British for the addition of Bastar State to his domain and the retrocession of Berar, which had been incorporated in the Central Provinces. Advances were made to the Portuguese Government about providing access to Hyderabad through Goa to the Arabian Sea.

Here, as in other instances of princely opposition to joining India, the undercover manoeuvrings of British officials and politicians, keen on seeing India weak and divided after Independence, played an important part in stiffening the resistance of the Nizam and the feudal clique which supported him. After vain attempts to persuade the Nizam to agree peaceably to joining the Indian Union, as the vast majority of his subjects demanded, the Indian Government organised a "police action" to effect the merger. The story ends with the Nizam's surrender and expression of complete confidence in Sardar Patel's political sagacity.

VOL. VIII : FOREIGN POLICY IN EVOLUTION—CONSTITUTION- MAKING—POLITICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE PROBLEMS

The future of India's relations with the Commonwealth of Nations, ties with Nepal, recognition of Communist China and disputes with Pakistan over canal waters, ill-treatment of minorities in Pakistan and evacuee property were important matters of foreign policy in which the Sardar made a significant contribution. The main task the Sardar undertook was to merge the Unions of Princely States with the adjoining states of the Indian Union, thus creating a bigger territorial unit than existed under the British or any former Raj.

Internally, differences arose over whether the first President of the Indian Republic should be C. Rajagopalachari or Dr. Rajendra Prasad. Nehru and Patel took different attitudes to mass agitation by the Akalis in East Punjab. The Hindu Code Bill was another issue on which eminent Congress leaders differed from the government's view.

The sentence of death was passed on 12 February on Nathuram Godse, the principal accused in the Gandhi murder case, and Patel overruled pleas for clemency. As Minister of Information and Broadcasting, he laid down a policy on the use of Hindi for the guidance of All India Radio.

Nehru visited the United States. Patel, the Deputy Prime Minister, filled in for him. His confidential fortnightly letter of over 10,000 words to chief ministers of states elaborating his political, economic and administrative philosophy is in the nature of a will and testament.

VOL. IX: POLITICAL CONTROVERSIES—REFUGEES FROM EAST BENGAL—TERRITORIAL INTEGRATION OF PRINCELY STATES

Factionalism continued to cause administrative snarls in the States and provinces and to this were added charges of corruption and abuse of power against those in authority. The Sardar was deeply involved in trying to keep peace among the warring factions and weeding out the corrupt. A controversy erupted in West Bengal over the relative status of Bengali and Hindi for official purposes, and a movement for Greater Bengal, including East Pakistan, raised its head in the province.

Friction within the Madras Ministry was sharpened by popular demands for a separate Andhra Pradesh. Factions within the Punjab Congress came to be identified with Nehru and Patel. In Hyderabad, the Communists as well as communalists became active and caused anxiety to the State administration. The Communist-supported uprising of the peasants of Telengana, who employed force to dispossess the landlords and divide up their property, led to military operations against them.

Communal riots broke out in West Bengal as more refugees streamed in from East Pakistan with stories of atrocities perpetrated on the Hindu minority there. The Congress party split in Andhra Pradesh at the same time as the Communist swung into action in the region. Master Tara Singh strove hard to stir up communal feeling in the Punjab. The Sardar advocated a cautious approach to the language problem in this province.

The partition of Bengal and the consequent loss of jute so necessary for mills in India was a matter of great concern to the Sardar who wanted the provinces to put more acreage under its cultivation. Food shortage equally worried him and he urged the provinces to open up waste lands and popularise modern and

better techniques of agriculture among farmers. On other economic fronts he appealed to labour on shun strikes for the more reasonable procedures of arbitration of disputes. To Rajendra Prasad's objection that the Hindu Code Bill should not be rushed through the legislature, he said the party had debated it and decided "to support" it. He emphasised that majority party decisions should be accepted and implemented by all members and objectors should quit. He stressed the need for quick action in the cases of suspended government servants.

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me by Congressmen. . . . As a result of this I cannot function in the Congress Working Committee or other executives; as a further consequence I cannot continue as Prime Minister. Apart from the logic of this, I am certain that I shall have no heart in holding on to my present position. That would not be fair to myself or to the Congress or the country."

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Sardar draws Nehru's attention to article in New York Times about relations between India and Nepal; Indian embassy in Washington advised to issue statement correctly explaining India's relations with Nepal; statement, refuting existence of any impasse between the two countries, says, "India has no territorial, political or economic designs on Nepal. She respects sovereignty of the ancient kingdom and her sole interest is that Nepal should be strong and prosperous. . . ."; intelligence report that Indian territory is being used in connection with trouble in Nepal; Sardar suggests to Nehru that Cabinet should discuss steps to ensure that India is not used for these purposes, and what our attitude should be to Nepal Congress and these disturbances; facts about rebellion in Nepal Tarai by Nepal Congress; distribution of leaflets by air; protest from Nepalese Government; flying of Indian aircraft over Nepal without permission banned; note on political conditions in Nepal prepared by PM; Sardar talks with Nepal's ambassador in New Delhi; World Bank President Eugene Black keen to visit India because he was "completely sold on India" and wanted to do "everything in his power to help India because he had been of the view . . . that our part of the world was undoubtedly the most important in the battle against communism and that India, as the leading country in that part of the world, should be helped substantially."; B. K. Nehru's letter to C. D. Deshmukh; Deshmukh cites his conditions for Black's visit; Sardar's message on inauguration of AIR's Indonesian service; Prof. Messerschmitt's project for starting aircraft industry in India; report by Indian Ambassador in Switzerland to Sardar; Sardar writes to Industries Minister Mahtab to have matter examined; Sardar expresses disappointment over Vampire production at HAL in letter to Mahtab; irregularities in Indian legation in Berne (Switzerland); Auditor to Finance Minister

The Prime Minister calls conference to discuss canal water dispute with Pakistan; Nehru asks East Punjab Governor C. M. Trivedi to be in Delhi to attend conference of officials; Trivedi writes to Nehru that if arbitration is agreed upon, it should be contingent on certain conditions being met by Pakistan; Sardar requests to Nehru to show him draft reply to Pakistan on canal water issue so that he could comment on it before it is finally sent; India sends reply to Pakistan Government's communication

Self-sufficiency in jute and cotton: Sardar writes to Commerce Minister Sri Prakasa commending Government's policy to increase acreage under jute and cotton even if it means some diminution in area under good crops; Sri Prakasa in response sends to Sardar papers bringing out salient facts regarding economics of cotton and jute production

Backward classes: Sardar supports appointment of Shrikant as backward class officer; disapproves of manner in which Jagjivan Ram has been canvassing for support and interfering;

Sikh homeland demand: Nehru writes to Sardar that Master Tara Singh's demand for Sikh state should be opposed by nationalist Sikhs because "remaining quiet will be misunderstood."; Nehru asks Baldev Singh to give lead in matter and says, "We should not allow a mischievous turn to events to grow and assume importance."; in his reply Baldev Singh says, "I have an impression that Master Tara Singh has become absolutely desperate and that he does not know what he is talking about. His utterances are not only not in the interest of the country as a whole but detrimental to his community. . . ."; at the same time Baldev Singh throws responsibility on shoulders of Punjab Government and State Congress both of whom he says "contributed little towards solution of the difficult question of communal amity"; in conclusion Baldev Singh says, "I am quite prepared to take up any lead any time to show him (Tara Singh) up and shoulder any responsibility that you entrust me."; Baldev Singh calls meeting of ex-Panthic MLAs in order to take organised stand against "the disastrous effect of Master Tara Singh's activities"; a nationalist Sikh writes to Nehru saying separate Sikh state "will isolate the Sikh Panth from the rest of the country and it will thus shatter the solidarity of the Sikh community which is already weakened by the partition of the country"

Sardar turns down request from Indian resident in London for articles on some main episodes of his life for publication in foreign press; Sardar thanks American Ambassador Loy Henderson for his birthday greetings; giving his views on foreign assistance in a speech in Ahmedabad, referring to press interview given by the Ambassador, Sardar said: "If you feel that because of pride or suspicion, or of the fear of criticism, that it will be considered alignment with one bloc you should not avail yourself of the offer (of U.S. assistance) it would be a mistake. . . . If with good intentions any country offers assistance to enable us to stand on our legs infant India should not refuse the offer."; intelligence reports on R. A. Kidwai's anti-party activities; B. Shiva Rao writes from UN Headquarters enquiring about election of candidates for Parliament for general election in 1951 and expresses interest in standing again; Sardar replies there is no hurry as elections have been postponed until November 1952; Sardar requests Rajagopalachari to reply to questions for him as he was not attending Parliament because his intestinal trouble persists; exchange of letters with Prime Minister on expulsion of a foreigner, Mr. Sayadiants; Sardar's last journey to Bombay before death; Nehru and Gopalaswami Ayyangar take temporary charge of Ministries held by Sardar with Rajaji being available for consultation and advice; Nehru expresses earnest hope to Sardar that "you will not trouble yourself over our day-to-day worries and look after your own health"

ABBREVIATIONS

ADC	Aid-de-Camp
AICC	All-India Congress Committee
AISA	All-India Spinners' Association
API	Associated Press of India
CID	Central Intelligence Department
CP	Central Provinces
CR	Chakravarty Rajagopalachari
HE	His Excellency
HM	Home Member or Hon'ble Member
ICS	Indian Civil Service
INA	Indian National Army
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
PCC	Pradesh Congress Committee
PPCC	Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee
PIO	Principal Information Officer
OCL	Open General Licence
UP	United Provinces
WG	Working Committee

GLOSSARY OF INDIAN TERMS

<i>Abhinandan Granth</i>	A book of a person's achievements presented by admirers
<i>Akhand Bharat</i>	United (unbreakable) India
<i>Ansars</i>	Volunteers with religious spirit of service
<i>Babu</i>	Term of respect used in Bengal and Bihar for members of the intelligentsia; commonly used for a clerk
<i>Bapu</i>	Father; affectionate term of respect for Gandhi used by followers
<i>Brahmin (Brahman)</i>	Highest caste of Hindu world. Originally a priestly caste
<i>Harijans</i>	Children of God, a term coined by Gandhi for untouchables; also title of Gandhi's weekly newspaper (Harijan)
<i>Hindu Mahasabha</i>	Communal organisation whose membership was confined to Hindus
<i>Ji</i>	Respectful address as in Gandhiji, Shastriji
<i>Mahatma</i>	Great Soul
<i>Panchayat</i>	Court of arbitration (properly of five persons) to settle petty disputes
<i>Pandit</i>	Title applied to those versed in scriptures but used commonly to denote a Brahmin
<i>Praja Mandal</i>	States Peoples' Association
<i>Sahib</i>	Master; respectful form of address
<i>Sardar (Sirdar)</i>	Chief, leader, generally applied to Sikhs and equivalent of Mr.; affectionate term of respect for Vallabhbhai Patel
<i>Satyagraha</i>	Holding on to truth; form of protest initiated by Gandhi and developed into a political weapon; concept of truth achieved through non-violent resistance
<i>Sheikh</i>	A caste among Indian Muslims

<i>Sikh</i>	Disciple; follower of Guru Nanak (1469-1538) the first of the line of 10 Gurus (leaders) who formulated a new faith to rid Hinduism of superstition and caste divisions
<i>Swadeshi</i>	Country-made
<i>Swaraj</i>	Complete control over one's affairs; independent statehood
<i>Thana</i>	Police station
<i>Zamindari</i>	Landlordism; also used to indicate cultivation of land

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convinced that I would serve the cause of our country much better today in a private capacity than in the public office that I hold. If I can be of any real service in the Bengals at present, then that would be a great service indeed."

In his brief reply the Sardar, sympathising with Nehru for his sense of oppression, advises "we should do nothing which would make confusion worse confounded and must quietly think over these matters."

Justifying his proposal, Nehru again wrote: "Things carry on by their own momentum and you will be there to guide them in any event. I hate to cast any additional burden on you. But, from another aspect, I feel that ultimately that burden might be lighter if I adopt this course. . . . It is not good enough for me to function, as I want to function, by continuing as Prime Minister. The effect I wish to produce would be to some extent nullified."

Temperamental differences and difference in viewpoints and approach to problems, internal and external, occasionally made it difficult for Nehru and Patel to pull together. A whispering campaign, in which some Government officials were involved, also sowed seeds of discord between the two men.

Nehru was told of a meeting to which the Sardar had invited some MPs and spoken about various matters and had allegedly criticized Government policy regarding Bengal and foreign affairs. Nehru's letter says: "For you to refer to all these important matters in the way you were reported to have done, before a number of members of Parliament, seemed to me very unfortunate and very extraordinary. . . . The personal aspect of it might be ignored, but the public aspect became important, and indeed a number of members who were present in your house were disturbed by this wider aspect of the problem. The lobbies were full of talk. . . . This was an extraordinary state of affairs and I felt that I could hardly continue as Prime Minister if this kind of thing was taking place. . . . The personal equation, as between you and me, has of course importance for both of us and for the country. But I think we shall consider this matter primarily, apart from the personal equation. After that decision on principle is taken, other questions can be decided with greater ease. In any event, the present disorderly state of our mind and work should be ended as soon as possible."

INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME X

This volume, the last of the series of ten, deals with 1950, a year packed with eventful happenings. Differences between the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister erupted in crucial matters concerning foreign and domestic affairs and the Congress organisation. This time they were papered over rather than composed. The chapter closed when Sardar Patel made his bow to life on 15 December 1950.

The beginning of the year saw a very troubled and sad Jawaharlal Nehru because of the events in East and West Bengal, and the attitude of the Congress party to them. Writing at length about this on 20 February to the Sardar, Nehru said these incidents by themselves "may not have been important, and yet they are significant of a trend which I consider very harmful. They were also significant of what I might call a basic difference in approach to various problems between the party and me. I think part of our troubles is certainly due to this difference in approach. Hence the party is dissatisfied often enough with what we do. At the same time it does not seek the natural way out of the impasse. It votes with us en bloc and at the same time criticises us bitterly."

Reverting to East and West Bengal, Nehru wrote: "I think the biggest issue in India is the Indo-Pakistan issue. . . . I think that war between India and Pakistan will have dangerous consequences and should be avoided, unless it is forced upon us. At the same time circumstances demand that our policy towards Pakistan should be clear and firm. The party has repeatedly made it clear that they disapprove of much that we have done in regard to Pakistan. Now this is a very vital matter and I entirely disagree with many of the criticisms made by the party. If this is so, then it is improper for me to continue guiding some policy which does not meet with the approval of members of the party. On the other hand I could not possibly act against my own convictions on vital issues."

In conclusion he said: "I try to give some reasons for my thinking. But in reality my thought at present is powerfully guided by a strong urge in me to act. I have considered all the arguments for and against and I realized that whatever I might do would bring a certain amount of confusion. . . . I am quite

each other. Nevertheless that we pull in different directions is not good and produces confusion."

On 26 January the new republic's first President, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, was sworn in and the last Governor-General, Mr. C. Rajagopalachari, was given a ceremonial send-off at Palam. This change was rebuff to Nehru by the party. It rankled.

The Sardar had a high sense of fairness towards the Services and he spoke out whenever unjustified criticisms were made against them. One such instance was a letter he wrote to Nehru, who had drawn his attention to the large number of police firings all over the country to quell disturbances and the need to hold inquiries into them. The Sardar wrote: "In my judgment, if the general public is unable to trust us, we have no reason to be where we are. Where we feel that on account of the matter being in doubt or in view of the heavy loss of life and property, an inquiry, whether departmental or otherwise, is necessary, we should be free to take a decision in favour of a suitable form of inquiry. Any convention, such as you suggest, would, in my judgment, be a slur on our representative character as well as capacity of judging things for ourselves. . . . We have to realize one cardinal fact, that we have still to educate our people into a sense of responsibility and civic duties. They have to cease to regard the police as instruments of oppression or tyranny. . . . I am quite convinced that administration, least of all police administration, cannot function if there is a shadow of inquisition hanging over the heads of the personnel. Administrative machinery is as sensitive as public opinion. We cannot afford to give a jolt to either, but if a choice has to come between the two, all that I can say is that it is easier to steady public opinion after a jolt than to steady the administrative machinery after demoralization has set in."

The situation in East Bengal and its repercussion in West Bengal occupied a great deal of the Sardar's time. He suggested to Nehru that in his negotiations with Pakistan Premier Liaquat Ali Khan he should link the two questions of restoration of looted property and restoration of abducted women to their families and forced conversions. He warned Nehru that Liaquat Ali was trying to commit India to a line of procedure both in regard to outstanding and future disputes which would give Pakistan, "in view of its complete disregard of scruples, principles and moral behaviour," a perpetual advantage over India.

Hurt by some of these statements, the Sardar replied: "I have no desire to continue if I cannot fulfil the mission entrusted to me by Bapu in his last moments and strengthen your hands, or if you entertain any suspicions about my loyalty to you, or if you think I am an obstacle in the implementation of your policies."

Recalling Gandhiji's advice that both of them continue to collaborate in the service of the country since the consequences of any separation would be disastrous to its interests, the Sardar wrote: "I have striven to my utmost to execute these last words of Bapu. I have according to my lights striven to strengthen your hands as much as I could, while giving expression to my views frankly and sincerely. I have given you my loyal support, often at times subjecting myself to considerable self-restraint. . . . We have differed on some matters but have recognized that such differences were natural and have adjusted ourselves in order to evolve an agreed policy. It has, therefore, grieved me greatly to feel that I have been found by you wanting in the execution of Bapu's last message."

Referring to the meeting of MPs addressed by him, the Sardar said: "I do not see that I have said anything at the meeting which I would not be prepared to repeat in your presence in the same gathering even now. . . . In fact, I was so certain about it that even when I was told after the party meeting which you convened and at which you spoke so vehemently that all that you said was directed at me I discounted the idea and said I could not believe it. . . . Your letter has afforded me most painful reading. Both age and health have conspired to cheat me of the full enjoyment and pleasure of carrying the heavy burden I have been undertaking in the cause of the country. If I have persisted, it has been only with a desire to strengthen your hands, share your burden, and continue to serve the country in the evening of my life. I have also held to the position because I have felt that our joint efforts are essential to pull the country through one crisis after another which have affected the course of its history after partition."

The Sardar's letters mollified Nehru who in his reply said: ". . . In spite of our affection and respect for each other, we do things differently and therefore tend to pull differently in regard to many matters. That is bad, for it affects not only policies but the administration. You and I get on much better together than most people imagine, and anyway we understand

and on the "wild insinuation" of "foreign influence" determining our attitude, the Sardar commented: "It looks as though it is not a friend speaking in that language but a potential enemy. . . . Recent and bitter history also tells us that communism is no shield against imperialism and that the communists are as good or as bad imperialists as any other. Chinese ambitions in this respect not only cover the Himalayan slopes on our side but also include important parts of Assam." He warned Nehru: "The situation is one in which we cannot afford either to be complacent or to be vacillating. We must have a clear idea of what we wish to achieve and also of the methods by which we should achieve it. Any faltering or lack of decisiveness in formulating our objectives or in pursuing our policy to attain objects is bound to weaken us and increase the threats which are so evident."

A departmental note on China and Tibet dated 18 November 1950 prepared by Jawaharlal Nehru and forwarded to the Sardar explained his policy on this issue. The Prime Minister contended that "our major possible enemy is Pakistan" and "that it is exceedingly unlikely that we may have to face any real military invasion from the Chinese side, whether in peace or in war, in the foreseeable future."

The Sardar's interest in starting an aircraft industry in India is disclosed in a letter he wrote to the Industries Minister in forwarding a report prepared by the German designer Messerschmitt. The Sardar was convinced that India should have complete air superiority to meet potential threats from neighbours, and in this connection he expressed his disappointment at the poor progress of Vampire production at Hindustan Aircraft Ltd., Bangalore.

In a letter to Nehru, Mr. Asaf Ali, Governor of Orissa, raised the question whether a Governor is bound to accept the advice of his Council of Ministers even if it militates against the Constitution and the best interests of the people. Conceding the importance of the issue, the Sardar replied that the constitutional position was delicate and "we have to so arrange matters that Governors do not become subjects of public controversy and public gossip."

India's age-old friendship with Nepal is reiterated in a statement repudiating the existence of territorial designs on Nepal as alleged in articles published in the New York Times in February. The Sardar said India respected Nepal's sovereignty, and

He was in favour of putting an end to the negotiations, at least for the time being. "We seem to be offering a counsel of peace where the spirit and mentality of war exist and where, to the best of our information, all preparations for war are being made," he told Nehru in a letter.

Reacting to Dr. B. C. Roy's suggestion to Nehru that some Bihar areas be transferred to West Bengal, the Sardar, agreeing with Nehru that it was most unwise for Roy to raise such a controversial question, told Nehru: "It is with difficulty that we are persuading State Governments to accept Bengalis. Once it gets about that this is accompanied by a demand for incorporation of certain areas into Bengal, it will scare them away and we shall find it impossible to persuade them to accept any more. Even at any other time such a demand would create a howl locally. At present it will create a most embarrassing situation for us."

Another incident during this period which caused great concern to the Sardar was the ideological clash between Nehru and Purushottam Das Tandon over Congress presidency for the coming session in August. Nehru thought that Tandon's election would mean encouragement to certain forces harmful to the country. The Sardar advised Nehru to have a "heart to heart" talk with Tandon, which advice Nehru accepted. Later he wrote to the Sardar that if Tandon was elected "I should treat it as a vote of no-confidence in me by Congressmen. . . . As a result I cannot function in the Congress Working Committee or other executives; as a further consequence I cannot continue as Prime Minister. Apart from the logic of this, I am certain I shall have no heart in holding on to my present position. That would not be fair to myself or to the Congress or the country." (The crisis ended finally with Tandon's resignation after the Sardar's death.)

The Sardar's views on relations with China and its occupation of Tibet are revealed in a prophetically-worded letter to Nehru, who had earlier written to the Sardar that the international situation "induces us to try to understand exactly what China is." The Sardar described the Chinese occupation of Tibet as perfidy. "The tragedy of it," he said, "is that Tibet put faith in us . . . and we have been unable to get them out of the meshes of Chinese diplomacy or Chinese malevolence. . . . I doubt if we can go any further than we have done already to convince China of our good intentions, friendliness and goodwill." On the manner in which China treated India's protests

Bombay was the Sardar's political base from the day he opened his office as Chairman of the Congress Parliamentary Election Board with Shantilal H. Shah as Secretary on 1 October 1945. The people of Bombay, who revered him, gave him a tearful and unprecedented funeral. The book of deeds of valour and wisdom then closed has been reopened by the history-making correspondence embodied in the ten volumes.

2 Tolstoy Lane
New Delhi 110001
7 April 1974

Durga Das

her sole interest was that Nepal should be strong and prosperous. Intelligence reports said that Indian territory was being used in connection with the trouble in Nepal, and he suggested that the Cabinet discuss steps to ensure that India was not used for these purposes, and what India's attitude should be to the Nepal Congress and the disturbances. Kathmandu protested against the dropping of leaflets by air and New Delhi banned the flying of Indian aircraft without permission.

World Bank President Eugene Black expressed a desire to visit India because he was "completely sold on India" and wanted to do everything in his power to help India because he was of the view that "our part of the world is undoubtedly the most important in the battle against communism and that India as the leading country in that part of the world, should be helped substantially."

The Sardar's views on foreign assistance is indicated in a speech he made at Ahmedabad in November. He was referring to a press interview US Ambassador Loy Henderson had given in Bombay. He said: "Many people say that we should not take the help of America because we will lose our prestige and we will be blamed for joining one bloc. We are not so ignorant as not to realize our own position and interest. Throughout its history America has never had any desire for colonial power. To extend help to strengthen us as a nation is their desire. If we have faith in ourselves, we should not mind if any other country is jealous of us."

The last two letters from Nehru to the Sardar (who died on 15 December 1950) are dated 12 and 13 December 1950. In the first Nehru expressed the hope that in the milder climate of Bombay the Sardar would recover rapidly. "Your recovery to health is the primary consideration at present. I hope you will try to forget our troubles and (not) think of present-day topics." He acquainted the Sardar with the arrangements that would be made while he was convalescing in Bombay.

The last letter of the correspondence dated 13 December 1950 is from Nehru in reply to the last letter dated 11 December the Sardar wrote to Nehru from his sick bed in Bombay. By a quirk of fate the letters revived the controversy over the power of the Prime Minister to go over the head of the Home Minister and entertain complaints and order an enquiry without the knowledge of the Home Minister. The Sardar's death two days later ended the unsavoury controversy.

CHAPTER I
NEHRU-PATEL DIFFERENCES

1

New Delhi
20 February 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

For some days past I have not had occasion to talk to you at any length, though we have met in the Working Committee and elsewhere. My mind has been greatly troubled and has been exploring various avenues of thought and action. This no doubt is a culmination of many happenings. But the immediate cause for this agitation of mind has been two-fold. One is the events in East and West Bengal, and the attitude of our party on various occasions and more especially in the debates on the Assam Bill and the Evacuee Property Bill. In the course of these debates, things were said by members of our party, which hurt me as well as some of our colleagues, namely, Gopalaswami¹ and Neogy.² They wrote to me about it and I think I passed on their letters to you. Those incidents by themselves may not have been very important, and yet they were significant of a trend which I consider very harmful. They were also significant of what I might call a basic difference in approach to various problems between the party and me. I think part of our troubles is certainly due to this difference in approach. Hence the party is dissatisfied often enough with what we do. At the same time it does not seek the natural way out of this impasse. It votes with us en bloc and at the same time criticises us bitterly. Criticism need not matter much. But some of the speeches delivered not only injure Government's prestige but create a bad effect on the public. I am

¹ N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar: PCS, Madras; Prime Minister of Kashmir, 1937-43; member, Constituent Assembly; Minister without Portfolio, Government of India, 1947-48; leader of Indian Delegation to UN Security Council, 1948; Minister for Railways and Transport and Defence

² K. C. Neogy: Member, Standing Committee of Ministers of the Chamber of Princes, 1940-42; Minister, Government of India, 1947-50; Chairman, Indian Railway Enquiry Committee, 1947; Chairman, Planning Advisory Board, Government of India

reliably informed that some of the speeches on the Evacuee Property Bill have had a bad effect not only in Delhi but outside also. Indeed I had a message from Kashmir that people were disturbed there by these speeches. They have added to the communal tension and made it worse.

If I may go back to another matter. You will remember that we have been discussing for some time past certain changes in the Cabinet and Ministries. We have also discussed the appointment of the Planning Commission. After much thought and consultation, I came to the conclusion that when the new Cabinet is formed by the President, changes should be made in some Ministries. These Ministries were Industry and Supplies, Food and Agriculture, and Rehabilitation. I should have liked, if possible, to make one or two other changes too, because I think it is desirable to have fresh blood. There is a tendency for us to become stale. However, for a number of reasons, I gave this idea up and concentrated on the three Ministries mentioned above. The changes I proposed were, as I told you, T. T. Krishnamachari¹ for Industry and Supplies, [H. K.] Mahtab² for Food and Agriculture, and Ajit Prasad Jain³ for Rehabilitation. I felt that, in the circumstances, these changes were desirable and should be given effect to.

I spoke to all the three persons mentioned above some time ago, 10 or 12 days or so. They all agreed. Just after that, a statement appeared by Ajit Prasad about UP Congress trouble. I did not like this statement and thought that it was very unwise of Ajit Prasad to make it. On talking the matter over with you, you suggested that I might consult Pantji about it. Because of this I postponed any action. I had a talk with Pantji about this and other matters. You know how I value Pantji's advice about any matter. I had a feeling, however, that his approach to the UP question was rather a narrow one and not in true perspective. As regards Ajit Prasad, he felt that his appointment

¹ Elected to Madras Assembly, 1937; Central Legislative Assembly, 1942; CA, 1946; member, Drafting Committee of Constitution; member, Financial delegation to UK, May 1948; Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, 1952-56; for Finance, 1956-58; without Portfolio, May 1962; for Economic and Defence Co-ordination, October 1962-August 1963; again Minister for Finance, September 1963-December 1965

² Member of CA from Orissa, 1946-50; Chief Minister, Orissa, 1946-50; Central Government Minister, 1950-52; Governor of Bombay, 1955-56; Chief Minister of Orissa, 1957-60

³ MLA (UP), 1937-48; Parliamentary Secretary, 1937-39; member Constituent Assembly of India, 1946-50; Minister of Rehabilitation and later of Food in Nehru Cabinet; Governor of Kerala, now member, Lok Sabha

here as a Minister would react unfavourably on the UP situation. There is something in that of course. But taking it all in all, I still felt that Ajit Prasad was the proper choice for Rehabilitation. He is able, experienced and restrained. He knows how to deal with people and has the right approach to this problem. In view of this, I should have liked to appoint him, after making it clear to him that his giving a statement to the Press had been wrong. But I hesitate to do so, as Pantji does not favour this appointment, though he recognises Ajit Prasad's ability. As a matter of fact Ajit Prasad has seldom functioned in public as a strong party man.

About the Planning Commission, after much consultation I had come to the conclusion that Gopalaswami might be Chairman and other members should be Chintaman Deshmukh,¹ Gulzarilal Nanda,² Gaganvihari [L.] Mehta³ and [Prof. P. C.] Mahalanobis.⁴

On further thought I dropped Mahalanobis. You will remember that in the Working Committee and elsewhere strong pressure was brought up on me to be Chairman of the Planning Commission. It is a work which I would like and my being Chairman would certainly give it the importance that I would like to give it. The only difficulty was one of adding to my activities. On hearing other people's arguments, I began to feel that perhaps it would be desirable for me to be Chairman. But the main work should fall on some other member of the Commission, who could be Deputy Cairman or function as such.

It was pointed out to me by Gulzarilal that it would be desirable to have a person who knew something about agrarian matters, a representative of industry as such and three other Congressmen interested in planning. I agreed with him, but there was the difficulty of finding suitable men. Ultimately I came to the conclusion that the Planning Commission should be something like this:

¹ ICS; successively Governor of Reserve Bank of India; Union Finance Minister; head of University Grants Commission and Vice-Chancellor, Delhi University

² Labour leader; Secretary, Ahmedabad Textile Labour Union, 1922-46; Parliamentary Secretary, Bombay, 1946-50, later Minister in Central Government, 1950-67; twice interim Prime Minister after death of Nehru and Shastri

³ Employee of Scindia Shipping Company who became a member of Planning Commission after Independence; ambassador in Washington; Chairman, Indian Investment Centre

⁴ Secretary and Director, Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta, since 1931; Statistical Adviser to the Cabinet, since 1949; Member, Planning Commission

Jawaharlal Nehru—Chairman
Gulzarilal Nanda,
Chintaman Deshmukh,
Gaganvihari Mehta,

R. K. Patil (Our present Food Commissioner).

A representative of industry, chosen in consultation with industry either previously or by the other members of the Commission somewhat later.

It was also suggested that we might give the Commission power to co-opt one or two persons for special purposes, whenever necessary. I was agreeable to this also.

Thus, so far as the Planning Commission was concerned, my mind became fairly clear as to what we should do. But because of these other developments that have taken place, I did not like to take any action immediately and that is where the matter stands now.

To go back to what I began with. The problem of East and West Bengal troubles my mind greatly and I have been thinking frequently as to how we can help. We have to be clear in our minds and action before another disaster descends upon us. Because of this, I telegraphed to Liaquat Ali Khan¹ suggesting that he and I should go to East and West Bengal. I have had no answer yet. But the more I think of it, the more I feel that some striking step should be taken in this matter.

So far as the party is concerned, it is not only getting out of touch with Government's policies and activities, but is also drifting away further and further from my own approach to these problems. I think the biggest issue in India is the Indo-Pakistan issue. This stretches from Kashmir to East Bengal, although the problems are different. I think that war between India and Pakistan will have dangerous consequences and should be avoided, unless it is forced upon us. At the same time circumstances demand that our policy towards Pakistan should be clear and firm. The party has repeatedly made it clear by its speeches that it disapproves of much that we have done in regard to Pakistan. Now this is a very vital matter and I entirely disagree with many of the criticisms made by the party. The difference

¹ Member of UP legislature, 1926-39; MLA (Central), 1941 and Deputy Leader of Muslim League; Finance Minister in Interim Government formed by Nehru in 1946; Prime Minister of Pakistan after partition; assassinated on 16 October 1951

is basic. If that is so, then it is improper for me to continue guiding some policy which does not meet with the approval of members of the party. On the other hand, I could not possibly act against my own convictions on vital issues. The result is I am all the time getting into petty conflict either with the party or sometimes even with certain activities of the Rehabilitation Ministry. The whole trend of the Rehabilitation Ministry is, I think, completely wrong.

That is a negative approach to the problem. The positive approach is a strong and earnest desire on my part to spend some time in the Bengals. This is apart from that joint tour with Liaquat Ali Khan that I suggested. I think I could make a difference there and it is of the highest importance that we should not allow ourselves to be submerged by the Bengal problem. Hence I come to the conclusion that I should get out of office and concentrate on one or two matters in which I think I can be helpful. The principal matters would be the Bengal problem and Kashmir. I cannot do this as Prime Minister, more especially because the views of the party are not in line with my own. There is a constant cry for retaliation and of vicarious punishment of the Muslims of India, because the Pakistanis punish Hindus. That argument does not appeal to me in the slightest. I am sure that this policy of retaliation and vicarious punishment will ruin India as well as Pakistan. We have set going a chain of action and reaction and unless one breaks out of that chain, we can never overcome these troubles.

I try to give you some reasons for my thinking. But in reality my thought at present is powerfully guided by a strong urge in me to act, as I have indicated. I have considered all the arguments for and against and I realised that whatever I might do would bring a certain amount of confusion. In the balance, however, I am quite convinced that I would serve the cause of our country much better today in a private capacity than in the public office that I hold. If I can be of any real use in the Bengals at present, then that would be a great service indeed. I want to try that. I also want to put an end to this constant bickering in the party and our rubbing each other in the wrong way from time to time. Even from other points of view about the future what I suggest has great value.

I have written to you frankly as to how I feel and I wish to repeat that, constituted as I am, I find it more and more difficult not to take some such action as I have indicated above.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Rajendra Babu.¹

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
21 February 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Your letter of 20 February was delivered in the office this morning while I was busy in the Cabinet meeting. Thereafter, because of question hour and Gopalaswami's speech, I could not read it. Here also, I had some guests for lunch. I have, therefore, read your letter just now. I am very distressed to feel that you have been so much agitated and troubled. If I had any hint from you, I would certainly have rushed to a discussion with you in an attempt to relieve your mind. I quite appreciate the sense of oppression which weighs over your mind, but we should do nothing which would make confusion worse confounded and must quietly think over these matters. I think we must meet and discuss. I am at your disposal whenever it is convenient to you.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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New Delhi
21 February 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thank you for your letter of 21 February which I received on my return home after 7 p.m. We have been having so many engagements and so much work that it is hardly possible to meet each other. I would have come to your place even this evening

¹ Dr. Rajendra Prasad: Congress leader from Bihar: close associate of Gandhi; lawyer of Patna High Court when he joined Gandhi's satyagraha against British indigo planters in Champaran district, Bihar, 1917; twice President of Indian National Congress; Minister for Food and Agriculture, Interim Government and in first Nehru Government after independence; Chairman, Constituent Assembly; first President of Indian Republic, 1950-62

after 7, if I had not had three or four engagements, one after the other, this evening. Some of these engagements were from people coming from outside Delhi. Early tomorrow morning at 7 I am going to Nilokheri and returning rather late in the evening. I do not know if that will be a suitable time to see you. It would be rather late. Apart from that I have fixed tomorrow night for drawing up a statement for Parliament about Bengal. I intend making this statement on the 23rd forenoon in Parliament. I have asked a number of Secretaries, including the Chief Secretary of West Bengal, to meet me here.

I shall of course take no step without full discussion with you. There are very few persons one can discuss these matters with, and I have not mentioned this to anyone else except Rajendra Babu whom I sent a copy of my last letter to you. I shall not rush into any action. But time does not stop for us, nor do events stay their course. I have a feeling, ever growing stronger, that something striking must be done to meet this terrible situation in Bengal. I have no illusions about my ability to stop the course of fate, if fate it is, or break the chain of action and circumstance. Yet I have, at the same time, some faith in myself, if I threw myself into a task with all the strength and energy that I possess. To my mind the biggest task of the day is this East and West Bengal matter. It is big, because of the fate of East and West Bengal and of the tens of millions who inhabit them. It is even bigger than that, for it overshadows and tends to overwhelm the whole of India.

There is this positive feeling in me that I must devote myself to this Bengal problem and do so on the spot. The problem itself demands that. But in addition to that, the memory of Bapu and all he did in Bengal comes back to me and I grow restless and unhappy.

That is the positive urge. It is just conceivable that some action of this kind on my part, with its dramatic implications, will strike the imagination of people both in West Bengal and East Bengal, and make them pause and think. That will not solve the problem, but it will gain precious time and time gained for thought might well make all the difference.

The negative urge is a feeling that I have largely exhausted my utility in New Delhi. Or, to put it in another way, that I can make myself more useful by other activity. I do a hundred odd jobs a day and they may have a certain value. But essentially they are very secondary and first things must come first in a crisis.

I wrote to you yesterday about the growing indiscipline and irresponsibility of many members of Parliament. That by itself, though distressing, is not of vital consequence. We have to work with the material available and it is not very creditable to blame others if things go wrong. What is more important is the difference in outlook between Parliament as a whole and me. They put up with me because of their friendliness towards me and their affection and a certain past record and habit of doing so. But they go farther and farther away from me in mind and heart. This produces unhappiness all round and frustration and work suffers. You and I have repeatedly drawn attention to some of these matters and we have no doubt produced some effect at the time. But the basic urges come up again and again and we face the same difficulty. Hence I feel that it is good for Parliament as well as for me to remove this sense of frustration from either of us and to give each other a certain freedom of action within a limited field. It may well be that some rather dramatic step that I might take might affect the situation here also for the better. It would make people realise that we are face to face with grim reality not only in Bengal but in our public life generally. We dare not be irresponsible or function with gusts of passion when the coolest thought allied to firmness is required. People take too many things for granted and while they do so, the ground slips from underneath their feet and a growing despair and resentment seizes the country.

From the Congress point of view also, the step I suggest for myself will shake Congressmen up and draw them out of their petty wrangles and jealousies. It is time we all shook ourselves up. We grow too complacent and smug. We want a little fire in our minds and in our activity.

Thus from every point of view, my proposal appears to be justified. If you think that it may cause some difficulty in our other work here, you are partly justified, but not much. Things carry on by their own momentum and you will be there to guide them in any event. I hate to cast any additional burden on you. But, from another aspect, I feel that ultimately that burden might be lighter if I adopt this course. I shall not be going away altogether. I shall be within hail and I shall come back when I feel that my work justifies it. A few months will not make much difference here. They might well make a difference elsewhere and in the minds of the people.

It is not good enough for me to function, as I want to function, by continuing as Prime Minister. The effect I wish to produce would be to some extent nullified.

As I wrote to you yesterday, I had in mind a slight reconstruction of Government. In view of what I have said, it would not be proper for me to undertake it. In the natural course a new Council of Ministers ought to be formed, whether they are all of the old guard or not. I have to put my resignation before the President and he has to ask someone to form a Cabinet.

The other matter that I wrote to you about was the Planning Commission. In my present mood I would rather be free of that also, so as to devote myself unhampered to the Begal problem. But I realise that this would create new difficulties and so, if others are agreeable, I would be prepared to serve on the Planning Commission. I view this Planning Commission as a top-ranking body with a great deal of authority and prestige, though with no executive power.

I am waiting for Liaquat Ali Khan's reply about our joint visit to East and West Bengal. His reply will affect my plans. But to a large extent they are independent of his reply. I can do much in Bengal, even though he does not co-operate in it.

For the present I should like to wait and see developments and get more news. But I am terribly afraid of a flood of refugees coming over as soon as the gates are open. So delay is bad. I should like to give ten days from now or at the most a fortnight.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
26 March 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I am writing to you after a great deal of thought, as I feel that I owe it to you and to myself to do so. We have been close friends and colleagues, in spite of differences of opinion, for thirty years or so, and we have passed through numerous crises together. I suppose we have got to know each other fairly well because of this long companionship and working together in all kinds of weather, fair and foul. We have a good deal of affection

and respect for each other and this has helped us a great deal in the past to face problems together.

You will remember that some months ago before Gandhiji's death, certain differences of opinion between us were repeatedly discussed before Bapu. In fact this went on almost to the day of his death. At that time we were faced by a difficult problem. Temperamental differences and differences in viewpoints and approach to certain problems made it a little difficult occasionally for us to pull together. Therefore the question arose whether it was desirable from the public point of view for those differences of approach to lead to certain consequences which were not good. On the other hand, it was manifest that conditions, as they were in India, demanded that we should pull together and subordinate, to some extent, our personal viewpoints in the interests of the larger good. The problem was a difficult one for us and we took Bapu's advice separately and jointly. Bapu was of opinion for some time that perhaps it was the right course for one of us to retire from Government, leaving the other a free hand. I offered to do so, and so did you. Neither of us of course wanted any office or wished any personal equation to affect either our personal relations or public policy. Nevertheless, after repeated discussion we felt, and Bapu appeared to be of this opinion just before his death, that, taking it all in all, it was our duty to pull together. We have tried to do so to the best of our ability for these past two years and more. Difficulties have often arisen, but both of us have this overriding sense that we could not endanger the larger interests of the country by imperilling this joint working.

Lately, however, new developments have taken place which have made me doubt seriously whether this attempt at joint working serves a useful purpose or whether it merely hinders the proper functioning of Government. Your remarks at a Cabinet meeting some days ago hurt me. But apart from the personal reaction, I was made to think, even more than before, that our approaches to certain vital problems were very different. A day or two later I made a statement, at the next meeting of the Cabinet, which you will remember. I made no personal reference then but I stated that I was deeply troubled in my mind and felt that the ideals we had stood for [for] a generation or more were fading away and no longer guided our policy. It was true that circumstances had changed and new problems had arisen which could not easily be dealt with by our old methods. Nevertheless, an ideal or objective or a basic policy could not be made the play-thing of circumstances, however immediate policies might vary.

That statement of mine was not due to a reaction to any particular event but rather to an accumulation of many things that had happened previously.

At that time I did not know that you had invited a large number of members of Parliament and spoken to them about various matters. I heard about this later from some of those present and I confess that I was deeply perturbed by what I heard. I was told that you expressed your strong disapproval about many of our policies for which I was responsible and you disclaimed any responsibility. This referred generally to the Bengal situation and what I had said about it, and also to our foreign policy. Other matters were mentioned to me also, but I need not go into them.

For you to refer to all these important matters in the way you were reported to have done, before a large number of members of Parliament, seemed to me very unfortunate and very extraordinary. It was clear that you did so under stress of strong opinions and feelings. The personal aspect of it might be ignored, but the public aspect became important, and indeed a number of members who were present in your house were disturbed by this wider aspect of the problem. The lobbies were full of talk.

A day or two later, a meeting of the party took place where reference was made by several members to whispering campaigns. No names were mentioned but it was clear what was hinted at. I heard also that Government officials were themselves taking part in this whispering business and had encouraged the writing of editorials in newspapers criticising me or what I had said.

This was an extraordinary state of affairs and I felt that I could hardly continue as Prime Minister if this kind of thing was taking place. Hence the feeling I showed in my speech to the party.

I have narrated some of these past events just to give the background of my own thought. We are facing today a crisis of the deepest magnitude and vital decisions have to be taken from time to time. Those decisions may be right or wrong, but they must be clear. If there is no clear objective or approach guiding them, they will tend to be confusing and contradictory. Hence *it has become necessary that we should be perfectly clear about our official aims and policies.* Naturally, existing circumstances and the succession of events force our hands. But even so, we cannot ignore any basic policy that we may pursue.

The whole Bengal problem and the Indo-Pakistan issue have many facets—political, economic, communal, national and international. Of these, the communal aspect has great importance.

Indeed the whole problem is in the nature of a communal problem. We have long stood for discouraging and putting an end to communalism. That has been the Congress policy and it has been repeated and affirmed by Parliament. We talk of a secular State. That of course simply means any normal State today, leaving out the abnormality of Pakistan's Islamic State. We adopted our policy regardless of what the Muslim League or Pakistan might say or do, because we thought that was the only policy, both from the idealistic and the practical and opportunist points of view. Any other policy could only lead to disruption and disaster. Certain organisations, notably the Hindu Mahasabha, adopted an exactly contrary policy, that is contrary to ours, though exactly similar, in reverse, to Pakistan's. I find that progressively we are being driven to adopt what is essentially the Pakistan or the Hindu Mahasabha policy in this respect. It may be that the circumstances were too strong for us. I do not think any circumstance can be strong enough to upset a long-term policy which we consider essential. I am quite convinced that that old policy of ours was the only right one and is the only right one in present circumstances. That was the Gandhian approach to the communal problem. It meant an attempt not only to protect the minorities but to win them over and thus demonstrate the rightness of our policy. If we do not adhere to that policy, then inevitably other consequences follow. It is no good at all for us to follow two contradictory policies at one and the same time. That is the worst way out of a difficulty.

The position today is that while Pakistan has followed and is following an intensely communal policy, we are tending to do the same and thus completely playing into the hands of Pakistan. Hindus in Pakistan are terrified and want to come away. There is no doubt that Muslims in India are also full of fear. There is hardly a Muslim in West Bengal or even in Delhi and many other places in India who has a sense of safety. Certainly they have no sense of future well-being and progress. That is no doubt partly due to circumstances beyond our control. But partly also it is due to our own wavering policy and to the thought in the minds of many of us that Muslims are aliens in India, not to be trusted, and to be got rid of as soon and as tactfully as possible.

In West Bengal conditions have become very bad. The murder of Cameron, presumably while defending his Muslim chauffeur, is of high significance, not because he was a prominent Englishman but because it shows up the state of Calcutta today. How can we

blame Pakistan for the misdeeds of any individuals or groups in Pakistan when we are totally unable to give security to our own people? There is little doubt that our reputation, whatever it was, is going to pieces and even our bona fides are challenged.

I think we have taken up far too lenient an attitude towards those in India who encourage this communal feeling of hatred and violence. The Hindu Mahasabha talks about Akhand Bharat, which is a direct incentive to conflict. War is openly talked about. As a Government we seem to be fading out of the picture and people publicly say that our Government has contradictory policies and, as a result, no policy at all. The belief that retaliation is a suitable method to deal with Pakistan, or what happens in Pakistan, is growing. That is the surest way to ruin for India and Pakistan and for vast numbers of human beings in these two countries. That surely is not a way to protect minorities.

Whatever Pakistan may do, we have a certain responsibility for Indian nationals, whether they are Hindu or Muslim. We are progressively unable to discharge that responsibility.

The question of foreign policy also comes up and has to be cleared. So also many other matters.

In these circumstances, the fact that you and I pull in different directions, and in any event the belief that we do so, is exceedingly harmful. Our Governmental machinery is suffering because of this and senior Government officers have the temerity to criticise Ministers of Government in private and even to some extent in semi-public. It is clear that such a situation must be ended as rapidly as possible.

The matter is far too important for a decision by individuals. It involves national policy. The party of course must have a say in the matter. But ultimately it is for the Congress organisation to decide, whether it is the Working Committee or the AICC. The Working Committee is meeting soon. Personally I think the matter is important enough for the AICC to have an emergency meeting. I wish we could have a full session of the Congress, but that is not possible for some months. A clear line must be laid down and followed rigorously and loyally.

There should be no doubt in the minds of the people and the party and Government officials what our policy is and how it should be carried out. Any weakness in it on the part of a Government official will have to be sternly met.

I have referred to these larger questions of policy which can be ignored no longer. I remember when the AICC met soon

after the Punjab disturbances and Gandhiji was present and guided our deliberations. Personally I feel that that line was correct then and is basically correct now.

The personal equation, as between you and me, has of course importance for both of us and for the country. But I think we should consider this matter primarily, apart from the personal equation. After that decision on principle is taken, other questions can be decided with greater ease. In any event, the present disorderly state of our minds and work should be ended as soon as possible.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

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New Delhi
28 March 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Your letter of 26 March 1950 has surprised and distressed me greatly. From your letter it appears you have carried a weight of mental anguish and a burden and mental worry which, having regard to the relations which have existed between us, I would have expected you to unburden on me not only during the several meetings we have had but also, if necessary, at any special meeting which I would have been only too ready to have had. In fact I feel personally pained and hurt that you should not have thought me to be deserving of such confidence and should have permitted yourself to be upset by what obviously interested and malevolently disposed persons have been telling you or others and propagating with obviously a mischievous design.

What you write about the unfortunate developments which preceded Bapu's death brings vividly to my mind the whole picture. But one thing in that stands out most prominently and it is the last conversation which I had with him and in which he expressed his considered opinion that both you and I should continue to collaborate in the service of the country since the consequences of any separation would be disastrous to its interests. I have striven to my utmost to execute these last words of Bapu. I have according to my lights striven to strengthen your hands as much as I could, while giving expression to my views frankly and sincerely. I have given you my loyal support, often at times subjecting myself to

considerable self-restraint. I cannot recall any time during the last two years when I have asserted myself against any determined course of policy which you have adumbrated. We have differed on some matters but have recognised that such differences were natural and have adjusted ourselves in order to evolve an agreed policy. It has, therefore, grieved me greatly to feel that I have been found by you wanting in the execution of Bapu's last message.

This also brings me to the tragic developments which preceded Bapu's death. I warned him and you then of the terrible consequences that I apprehended of the developing serious situation. Unfortunately the tragedy could not be averted and [it] engulfed us. Certain persons even then interested themselves in creating an estrangement between both of us. They tried to poison your ears as well as Bapu's against me. After Bapu's death you wrote to me an affectionate and touching letter which I have prized all along and we resolved to devote ourselves jointly to the cause of our country. It appears that some persons have again found in the present troubled atmosphere and your own troubled state of mind an easy opportunity of creating an atmosphere of doubts, misgivings and conflict. I am really sorry and distressed that you should have listened to their accounts and given credence to them without asking me even once for the authentic version. It is not, however, that aspect which bothers me so much as the parallel with the tragic situation which preceded Bapu's martyrdom. My mind is full of apprehensions about the end and consequence of it all, considering the highly emotional and explosive temperament of the Bengalees and the surcharged atmosphere all over the country, affecting not only the towns but the villages which fortunately had been immune from the pernicious malady. I sometimes have the feeling that we are on the verge of a tragedy which might still be averted if we could act in time.

Now I shall come to the meeting of 50 or 60 persons at my house to which you refer. I had been approached by [Mahavir] Tyagi¹ to meet some members who had some doubts and difficulties about my attitude over various matters and wanted virtually to put me on the defensive. I put him off as I knew that this was

¹ Member, UP Assembly, 1939 and Constituent Assembly, 1947; Minister of State in Nehru Ministry as Minister of Revenue and Expenditure for two years and of Defence Organization for four years; Chairman of Direct Taxes Administration Inquiry Committee; Minister of Rehabilitation of Refugees in Shastri Cabinet, resigned in protest against Tashkent Agreement; Chairman, Finance commission; now member of Rajya Sabha

likely to be misused. Then came the Home and States ministries' demand on which there were 75 to 100 cut motions. In accordance with the usual arrangements, a meeting of these members was convened in the Council of States room to discuss the cut motions. Subsequently I was told that members wanted to meet me at the house. Having regard to the view I held of the earlier attempt of Tyagi to have a meeting at my house, I told Satyanarayan [Sinha] Babu of the un wisdom of this step. Then Balkrishna Sharma sent a note to Satyanarayan Babu giving a notice of a cut motion of Rs. 100 "to enable Shri Balkrishna Sharma to have tea at the Home Minister's house." This was obviously done in good humour and I was told that the demand was backed by a large number of members. Even then I told Satyanarayan Babu of the danger in having such a meeting and particularly pointed out that a set of people might try to make capital out of it in their propensity for mischief and might "carry tales." However, in view of the pressure I had to yield but it was quite clear even then that the meeting would be devoted to discussing the cut motions and the invitation was restricted to those who had sponsored cut motions.

The tea was accordingly arranged and we all discussed one or two matters arising out of the cut motions in a good-humoured way. It was then that all of them said that they wanted to hear my views about East Bengal. The request was insistent and I had to say something. Even then the line I took was to explain why we could not take any precipitate action; I told them that you were very unhappy about the sufferings which our people were undergoing, that it worried you day and night and that they should not do anything which would irritate you or make you more unhappy. I was then asked about war. I told them that we had to be prepared for all eventualities and were preparing ourselves accordingly but that no action such as war could be taken unless people could speak with one voice. I told them that in Hyderabad also we had long arguments over the pros and cons and a lot of time elapsed. It was only when we all became of one mind that we could take action. Bengal was different. It meant an all-out war between two independent countries and it is all the more necessary that we should have complete unity amongst ourselves. I was then asked that opportunity should be provided to enable the members to express their strong feelings on the subject to you. I told them the time was not appropriate for such a meeting and in the fluid circumstances words might be used which would cause you irritation and unhappiness and

therefore I advised [them] against such a move. I also told them that even if there was a difference between what they thought the best course was to wait for time to resolve the differences and not create bitterness. They all seemed to appreciate the position and I was, therefore, surprised when a party meeting was called.

It was at this stage that some persons mentioned our external publicity and its failure to make any impression in foreign countries and among foreign correspondents. I then told them the limitations within which our external publicity was functioning and explained that while it had its faults similar to our internal publicity, they had to realise the difficulty of explaining to an opportunistic world the moral standpoint of our foreign policy. I also pointed out to them that they must understand the power and bloc politics of the world and assess the reactions which our moral standpoint must produce on a world used to expediency as against our principles, to intense nationalism as against our internationalism, and to "group" mentality as against our avoidance of any entanglements. I added that in the process of making our moral standpoint known better and of following our policy we were bound to tread on many corns and make enemies or lose friends. In illustration I cited how having to take the lead in the recognition of China we had to alienate the so-called nationalist China, whose leader had undoubtedly tried to help us in his own way during our struggle for freedom; similarly our antipathy to the recognition of Bao Dai was bound to be misunderstood by France, the UK, and the USA and the delay in the recognition of Israel because of the feelings of our Muslim citizens on this question would probably cost us some of the goodwill of Israel and countries interested in it. I also pointed out that even some of the Muslim countries had recognised Israel but we had not out of deference for the views of our Muslim brethren. I then referred to the advantage which Pakistan enjoyed over us. In the first place it seemed to arouse the instinctive sympathy of the Europeans. Secondly it went whole hog to align itself with the British and Americans and was in the Commonwealth by virtue of common allegiance to the British Crown while we were a republic. There were also British officers in much greater proportion in its [armed] and civil services. All the retired British Civil servants were pro-Pakistanis and the whole of the British Press was practically guided and ruled by them on Indian affairs. I told them that in these circumstances our external publicity would not achieve everything that they expected it to. You will, therefore, see that it was in a different connection that the question of our

foreign policy came up and there was no criticism of it on my part and certainly no disclaimer of my responsibility for it.

It was then that the question was raised about the attitude of the RSS on this issue. I told the meeting that I myself have had some general talks with the RSS leader and have found him generally conforming to my advice of restricting himself to cultural or social matters and advising his followers to support Government. I also told them that my original belief that Bapu's murder was not the result of an RSS conspiracy but that of a section of the Hindu Mahasabha had been confirmed and that I personally regarded the Mahasabha as a greater danger than the RSS. It was at this stage that Balkrishna Sharma said that he had all along felt that the Working Committee's explanation of its earlier decision about the RSS and the Congress was wrong. I replied that I myself felt like that but then the point had been now settled. There were one or two other matters also mentioned namely, Pakistan espionage activities, [Mir] Laik Ali's escape and its consequences, but these are not relevant to your letter and therefore I omit them.

The meeting then terminated. At the end, however, I warned Satyanarayan Sinha that interested persons might misrepresent matters and warned him against their activities. He accordingly went to you and gave you an account of what transpired. I have now given you a fairly detailed account of the genesis of the meeting and what transpired. I can tell you quite frankly that even at this stage I do not see that I have said anything at the meeting which I would not be prepared to repeat in your presence in the same gathering even now and that I do not see how anything that I said can be construed in the manner in which it was apparently represented to you and which upset you so much. In fact I was certain about it that even when I was told after the party meeting which you convened and at which you spoke so vehemently that all that you said was directed at me I discounted the idea and said that I could not believe it.

You have also referred to a Cabinet meeting at which I made remarks which hurt you. I do not know which Cabinet meeting you refer to but if you are referring to the one which you held the day after you made your statement to the Assembly on your return from Calcutta, I might say that I still have the impression shared by many others that we had decided to discuss the matter again after your return from Calcutta and I, therefore, genuinely felt that a statement should have been made only

after such discussion in the Cabinet. I am sorry if all this hurt you but I am sure you will agree from the reactions which your statement produced all over India and more especially in Bengal that what I felt was not without substance. As regards Pakistan in general and East Bengal in particular, there is undoubtedly a difference in our approach but I do not think I have at any time allowed that difference to oppose you in regard to any action which you deemed right. While expressing my views in favour of a firm policy and a more determined stand, I have submitted to any action that you eventually decided. As regards the differences of our approach, as far as I know there has been none as regards the secular ideals to which we all subscribe and for which we all stand; in fact I have throughout emphasised the need for full protection of minorities in India and condemned violence. At the same time I have not ignored the basic cause of such violence, namely, what is happening in Pakistan and the bitterness which it engenders in the country. When we consider stern action to deal with trouble on our side we have to take into account this fact, for to ignore it would mean our depending on coercion and suppression to deal with the psychology of deep-seated grievances and prejudices as regards our neighbours which unfortunately has repercussion on the followers of Islam in this country. You yourself have recognised this in your correspondence with the Pakistan Prime Minister. I have also laid stress on the fact that our secular ideals impose a responsibility on our Muslim citizens in India—a responsibility to remove the doubts and misgivings entertained by a large section of the people about their loyalty founded largely on their past association with the demand for Pakistan and the unfortunate activities of some of them. It is in this light that to my mind some tangible steps to deal with the present situation become urgent and that is why I have been insisting on a well-considered, firm and determined line of approach. I do not think that any discussion in the Working Committee or the AICC would be of any help. In fact, I am convinced that the less we discuss these matters in public or semi-public and the more we concentrate on setting a firm line of policy the better; it will avoid public bitterness and exhibition of tempers such as we are witnessing in Bengal and elsewhere today; it will also convince the people that we have a plan to deal with the problems and that we mean business. This would have a much more settling and steadying effect than a public discussion of the different lines of approach which are holding the field in the Press and on the platform. The need of the hour is to rally the country

round a settled programme—settled not in the dust, turmoil and passion of public controversy but quietly in the meetings of a small business-like body as we did in the case of Punjab disturbances or Hyderabad. I am sure the country will follow us in a disciplined way once we have come to a decision in a clear-cut manner. I have no doubt things are going out of control in Bengal and may be more so there and elsewhere in India because of a feeling of frustration and the general belief that the Government has no fixed or final policy to deal with this grave situation.

You have also referred to the attitude which we have taken on communal hatred and violence. I do not think it would be correct to call it lenient. I think figures will bear out that we have controlled the communal Press far more drastically than the Communist and our action has been circumscribed only by the provisions of the law as interpreted by our legal advisers and the High Courts. We put thousands in jail and adopted a policy of release only after we were continuously attacked on the score of maintaining civil liberties. You will yourself recall the many letters you wrote to me on this subject last year. We are now faced with a Constitution which guarantees fundamental rights—right of association, right of free movement, free expression and personal liberty—which further circumscribe the action that we can take. That means that for every executive action there must be legal sanction and judicial justification. If within these limits you feel that our policy towards communal organisations has been lenient, steps can certainly be taken in the manner you may suggest.

On the question of foreign policy, I do not think I have at any time expressed any difference of approach except in the Cabinet whenever any particular subject has come up before the Cabinet. I have already expressed to you what I said at the meeting and the context in which it was said. I do not think in the pursuit of foreign affairs you have met any obstruction or opposition from me or any of your Cabinet colleagues. In private some of us may have expressed our disagreement with a particular item of that policy but I do not think it can be your intention that we should not express ourselves even in private.

I am in full accord with you that Government officials, high or low, should live themselves up with such policy as we decide but I do not think we can regiment their private views or muzzle them to that extent. We can only insist that in public as well as in official matters they implicitly execute settled policy. We

should also not too readily believe any whispers started about their attitude or activities which interested parties such as those which try to create a rift between you and me might launch against them. I myself feel that allowing for our gossip-mongering which seems to have become our natural vice, they have loyally executed our policies. I agree with you that where we find any lapses in this respect we must deal with them strictly and adequately.

I think I have now dealt with all the matters which troubled you and which found an expression in your letter. Your letter has afforded me most painful reading. Both age and health have conspired to cheat me of the full enjoyment and pleasure of carrying the heavy burden I have been undertaking in the cause of the country. If I have persisted, it has been only with a desire to strengthen your hands, share your burden, and continue to serve the country in the evening of my life. I have also held to the position because I have felt that our joint efforts are essential to pull the country through one crisis after another which have unfortunately affected the course of its history after partition. In fact I even now feel that what Bapu said in January 1948 still holds good and it was in this spirit and out of this realisation that I appealed to you in our earlier correspondence not to take the step you contemplated of going out of office. I hold that any of the ways would spell disaster to the country. Hitherto I have been sustained in my heavy burden by the thought that I had your trust and confidence but I am shaken in the belief by the manner in which you accepted statements made by those interested persons without even verifying from me as to what I had stated and in what context and manner. I have no desire to continue if I cannot fulfil the mission entrusted to me by Bapu in his last moments and strengthen your hands or if you entertain any suspicion about my loyalty to you; or if you think I am an obstacle in the implementation of your policies. Indeed, but for the series of crises which have threatened the country, I would have preferred to spend the time that is left by Providence in constructive work. After all even from outside I could try to strengthen your hands, having failed to do so to your satisfaction from inside. I would not like that on my account we should in any way convert the organisation or the country into an arena of controversy particularly at a time when what the nation needs is a united voice and a strength which comes only from unity.

I have expressed myself fully and frankly. I first thought of coming over to you for a discussion rather than write at such

length but then I thought that after I had explained myself on the points you have mentioned, it would be easier for us to discuss. I should not like to prolong your agony and it is possible that a personal discussion may help to assuage each other's feelings if written or spoken words have proved inadequate. I am at your disposal whenever you want me to come over.

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

6

New Delhi
29 March 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thank you for your letter of 28 March. I am writing to you briefly as I hope to have a talk with you soon, perhaps more than one talk. Indeed it was my intention all along to have this talk. But I wanted some leisure moment and neither you nor I could easily find it. I wrote to you rather on the spur of the moment one night because I felt that I ought to put before you some thoughts in my mind. That would perhaps help in a future discussion.

You have written to me at length and have taken a lot of trouble over it. It was not necessary for you to explain petty incidents, nor is it my habit to listen to gossip or stories. I mentioned the report of the meeting you had at your house because it became common talk among members of Parliament and was actually referred to indirectly but nevertheless pointedly at the party meeting. There was nothing that you were reported to have said, even if that had been correct, that had great importance. I know that things are torn out of their context. I was quite sure then, as I am now, that you would not say anything deliberately to others that you would not say to me. I know very well how much pains you have taken in the past to accommodate me and I am grateful to you for it.

What has been troubling me is something more basic and fundamental. It has two aspects. One is rather personal and the other completely impersonal. The personal aspect is that in spite of our affection and respect for each other, we do things differently and therefore tend to pull differently in regard to many matters.

That is bad, for it affects not only policies but the administration. You and I get on much better together than most people imagine and anyway we understand each other. Nevertheless that pull in different directions is not good and produces confusion.

The second impersonal aspect is the drift in the country, whether it is governmental, Congress or other. As I said in the Cabinet one day, I see every ideal that I have held fading away and conditions emerging in India which not only distress me but indicate to me that my life's work has been a failure. I am not a person, I hope, who runs away from a difficulty. But the problem before me is how best I can fight for the ideals I hold dear and which I consider, from the strictly practical point of view, important and essential for India. I believe firmly that if we move away from those basic ideals for which the Congress stood and for which Gandhiji stood (I am not referring to minor details), then India goes rapidly to disaster and ruin. Ultimately, real disaster only comes from within and not from outside. It is this inner rot that is the most distressing symptom of today.

I hope we shall have a chance of having full and frank talks soon.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

CHAPTER II
FACTIONALISM IN SAURASHTRA

7
TELEGRAM

Rajkot
18 April 1950

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
C/o Chief Minister
Calcutta

GLAD TO INFORM NOTORIOUS DACOIT VISA AND ENTIRE GANG KILLED
BY SORATH POLICE LAST NIGHT IN GIR FOREST.

RASIKLAL PARIKH¹

8
TELEGRAM

Government House
Calcutta
18 April 1950

Shri Rasiklal Parikh
Home Minister
Rajkot

THANKS FOR GOOD NEWS. MY HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS TO YOU
AND OFFICERS AND MEN ENGAGED IN OPERATION. PLEASE SEND
DETAILS OF INCIDENT.

VALLABHBHAI

¹ Minister for Home, PWD, Information, Saurashtra Government; subsequently
Chief Minister, 1954-56; Minister for Revenue, Bombay Government, 1956-60; for Home
and Revenue, and Industries, Gujarat Government, 1960-63

TELEGRAM

8 June 1950

Honourable Sardar
Vallabhbhai Patel
Dehra Dun

CONSIDER MOST INADVISABLE AND INOPPORTUNE TO DISPENSE WITH
DHEBARBHAI IN THE PRESENT CONTEXT.

TRAMBAKLAL DAGLA

Camp Dehra Dun
11 June 1950

My dear Dhebar,

We have received reports about a meeting convened by Samaldas [Gandhi]¹ on 13 May in the Vande Mataram Press at Bombay with the object of creating an independent non-political party against the Saurashtra Congress. It appears that an ad hoc committee consisting of Samaldas Gandhi, Narbheram Paneri, reported to be a Socialist, and others has been formed and that attempts are being made to enlist the support of local girasdars. I should like to know how far the report is correct and what reactions you anticipate it will have on local Congress politics.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri U. N. Dhebar
Chief Minister
Saurashtra
Rajkot

¹ Active in Kathiawar States Peoples' Conference and Kathiawar Congress; took leading role in agitation against Junagadh's accession to Pakistan in 1947; head for Provisional Government set up in Junagadh

Chief Minister
State of Saurashtra
Rajkot
22 June 1950

Pujya Sardar Sahib,

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated 11 June 1950. Shri Samaldasbhai has been trying to collect all sorts of elements under him for some time past. On the 13th, there was a meeting held in Bombay in the Vande Mataram office, where he had invited a number of persons, prominent amongst them being Shri Narbheram Paneri, a Socialist, Shri Jatubhai Mehta, a Socialist, Shrikant Doshi, also a Socialist. Shri Samaldasbhai was the president of the meeting. The issue of Janshakti of 14 May 1950 correctly represents the gist of what he spoke. I am enclosing a cutting herewith.

2. Shri Samaldasbhai's idea appears to be to organise a sammelan [conference] in Bombay in the month of August to form a nucleus of a party in Bombay and thereafter come to Saurashtra to prepare for the coming elections.

3. For the last two or three days he has come out with an open attack against Shri Balwantibhai¹ and other members of the Cabinet and addressed me to give him an opportunity to show all evidence in his possession to prove nepotism, corruption, favouritism, despotism on the part of the Ministers and all other ills that he thinks Saurashtra is today filled with. I have discussed this matter with the colleagues and I have addressed him a letter today, a copy of which I am sending herewith. As soon as I receive the reply I will let you know.

4. Shri Samaldasbhai is suffering from a country-wide disease: call together all the disgruntled elements of the country to rush to the seat of power: and as far as I can see he has determined to take the course and will not be amenable now to any reason or advice.

With pranams,

Yours obediently,
U. N. Dhebar

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

12

Camp Dehra Dun
1 July 1950

My dear Dhebar,

I am sending herewith an extract of a report which I have received. I should like to have your comments.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri U. N. Dhebar
Saurashtra
Rajkot

ENCLOSURE

INTELLIGENCE BUREAU MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

EXTRACT FROM THE DAILY SUMMARY OF INFORMATION OF THE CIO,
RAJKOT, DATED 24 JUNE 1950

CONGRESS

A Congress worker, Mr. Bachubhai Acharya, who had taken a certain meadow land at Bela (Halar dist.) for starting a sarvodaya ashram there but subsequently cut all the trees and sold them and was utilising the land for private purposes, has been asked to resign from Congress membership. This is reported to have been done under the instructions of the Chief Minister. Vande Mataram of Bombay in a side article is pressing for legal action in the matter. Of late Vande Mataram and Janshakti, a Socialist paper from Bombay, appear to be resorting to strong propaganda to criticise all actions of the Saurashtra Government.

The municipal elections were held at Palitana (Gohelwad dist.) on about 18th. There were 19 Congress candidates and 19 independents. It is reported that as the Congress candidates felt diffident to contest the elections they all withdrew in a lot, and all the 19 independents have been returned unopposed.

could be no question of tenders. The only thing that could be said is that there was not sufficient publicity. There also the department cannot be charged with withholding information to favour Fulchhab for two stalls have been given to Jai Hind, which, as I have said, is not a supporter of the Government in the remotest sense of the term. Jai Hind could have known of it only if there was some publicity. Thus it is very clear that there was no question of excluding any paper, whether a favourable critic or of an opponent.

Then the question is what was the intention in writing this letter. Balwantbhai has given an explanation. He wanted to see that the bookstalls were opened at every junction station for the reading public. That was the only part of the Catering Committee's recommendations which remained to be fulfilled and he wanted to fulfil them before the railways were handed over. That is a reasonable ambition if it is viewed in that light. Point 5, which is supported by an endorsement in the letter itself, shows that there was no desire to give the stalls except under a licence, and [the] licence mentions the terms and conditions on which bookstalls could be opened. It could not have resulted in any loss to the Government of India more than the stalls given to Jai Hind, where it is not suggested there has been any favouritism.

The only other point is whether it is proper for a Minister to write such a letter which would even remotely be construed as an act of favouritism. Shri Balwantbhai accepts that it was an indiscretion to have done so and he has placed himself in your hands as well as mine.

My first reaction was that this is a question of Congress integrity. Subjectively, we are here to change the outlook of the administration and examine all questions from a particular angle, viz., service of the people without fear or favour. Any kind of fear or favour should be scotched at the source and the Ministers are bound to look to it that it is done. But Balwantbhai was looking to the public need also. If Balwantbhai felt that it was a public need, which in the circumstances should be fulfilled directly, and wrote the letter it does not cease to be an honest decision, though an erroneous one. It [would] have been better if he had preferred to allow the time to satisfy the needs rather than placing himself in this unenviable position. What is required is a reaffirmation of the principle that no Congressman should while in office go out of his way to serve a public need, if that way would even indirectly affect the integrity and prestige of the

administration or organisation. Balwantbhai and the rest of us are sufficiently warned of it and with him we all may assure you that we shall see that that principle is scrupulously observed.

If you, however, think that this will not meet with the situation Balwantbhai will cheerfully carry out your decision.

With pranams,

Yours obediently,
U. N. Dhebar

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

14

New Delhi
29 July 1950

My dear Dhebar,

Thank you for your letter dated 28 July 1950 regarding Balwantray.

Since then we have had a discussion, and you will doubtless take action in the light of the same.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri U. N. Dhebar
Saurashtra
Rajkot

15

Rajkot
28/29 August 1949

My dear Shankar,

I am enclosing herewith a copy of the letter I have received this day from Shri Morarjibhai for H.M.'s information. Shri Samaldasbhai is reaching Bombay tomorrow. H.M. may, if he so desires, call him. I am going to Delhi for attending the Fiscal Integration Committee report meeting which is fixed for 3 September. I may go via Bombay. But it is not certain. I have written to Shri Samaldasbhai today. He was at Bombay and it is possible that he might have made all the arrangements in the

MISCELLANEOUS

A photostat copy of a letter alleged to have been written by Hon'ble Shri Balwantray Mehta, Deputy Chief Minister, has appeared recently in Vande Mataram of Bombay. The letter is addressed to Mr. Jethalal Shah, editor of Fulchhab, a pro-Government paper, and the latter directs him to hurry up with taking of contracts for vending on railways before the Saurashtra Railways were taken up by the Central Government. Shri Balwantray was then in charge of Communications. This has resulted in very adverse criticism of the work of Government machinery. It is heard that a file containing this correspondence and so also other secret papers have disappeared from the office of Mr. C. T. Trivedi, the Chief Traffic Supdt. of Saurashtra Railways.

It is learnt that a case has been filed against Shantilal Kamdar, a supervisor of the Road Transport Department of Saurashtra, for misappropriation of petrol. The public expect that certain disclosures will be made during the trial of the case as the petrol had originally been misappropriated by other top officials and the present accused was only being made the scapegoat.

For information.

B. N. Mullik
Deputy Director

28 June 1950

13

Chief Minister
State of Saurashtra
Rajkot
28 July 1950

Pujya Sardar Sahib,

In continuation of my letter acknowledging yours of 1 July 1950 on the subject of the facsimile letter appearing in the Vande Mataram of 18 June 1950, I am offering my comments here below after getting my colleague's explanation which is annexed hereto.

Fulchhab, as you know, is the one paper that has been responsible for publication of a lot of Gujarati literature on this side of Saurashtra. As a weekly also it has been the oldest journal dealing with Saurashtra politics. Under the editorship of Meghani-bhai it had acquired a reputation for very sober and yet intelligent and constructive criticism of the policies of the then governments

and vindication of public opinion. Megbanibhai had been able to give it a dignity and respectability possessed by very few papers in India. Naturally therefore Fulchhab has acquired an abiding place in the hearts and minds of the leaders.

Save and except this Balwantbhai has no relationship with Fulchhab. He is not on the directorate, neither is he a shareholder thereof.

This controversy centres round Nathabbai, the present editor of Fulchhab. Nathabbai is a friend of Balwantbhai like others but profit to Fulchhab will not benefit Nathabbai personally.

It is not alleged and could not be alleged by any one who knows Balwantbhai that there is any question of personal gain in this matter. Balwantbhai is neither now on the directorate of the paper nor is likely to be one.

I can therefore say with such emphasis as I can command and with full responsibility that there is no question of a deal in this case even remotely verging on the side of corruption.

The next question is whether it is or is not favouritism. I have considered this aspect also. The following points deserve to be noted in this connection:

- 1 The stalls are given on a licensing system.
- 2 The licence fees are fixed.
- 3 There can be more than one stall, space permitting, at the same station.
- 4 The railway authorities were trying to let out these stalls from 1949, but except for stalls at two places nobody else was forthcoming.
- 5 There was no question of giving the stalls to Fulchhab except on the terms fixed for all.

Point 3 gives a different complexion to the whole matter. No exclusive advantage was sought to be given to Fulchhab, even if it was an advantage. There are two stalls at Rajkot run by persons other than Fulchhab. There are stalls at other places also. One of them was given after 1949 and to a paper which is a merciless critic of the Government. There was no question of ousting anybody who wanted to open a stall.

Point 4 also is material. It is being attacked on the ground that no tenders were asked for. In a case like this, where fees were fixed, coupled with the fact that there was no monopoly and more than one paper could open a stall at the same place, there

matter. I would like to receive guidance from H.M. in the matter at an early date.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

U. N. Dhebar

V. Shankar, ICS
Private Secretary to
the Hon'ble the Deputy Prime Minister
Bombay

ENCLOSURE

Secretariat, Bombay

26 August 1949

My dear Dhebarbhai,

I understand from the Commissioner of Police, Bombay, that a case for contravention of clause 9 (a) of the Paper Control (Economy) Act, 1945, has been refiled before the 2nd Presidency Magistrate, Mazgaon, Bombay, at the instance of the High Court. Shri Samaldas L. Gandhi, who is the 2nd accused in this case, did not present himself in the court when it came up for hearing and a warrant of arrest has therefore been issued against him. Looking to the history of the case and the position now occupied by Samaldasbhai in the Government of the United State of Saurashtra, it appears that it would be advisable for him to appear before the magistrate without waiting for the execution of the warrant. I am therefore to request you kindly to advise Samaldasbhai to appear before the 2nd Presidency Magistrate, Mazgaon, Bombay, without waiting for the execution of the warrant or write to the magistrate of his willingness to do so whenever required.

Yours sincerely,

Morarji Desai

The Hon'ble Shri U. N. Dhebar
Premier of Saurashtra
United State of Saurashtra
Rajkot

Bombay
1 September 1949

My dear Dhebarbhai,

Thank you for your letter of 29 August 1949 which I have shown to Sardar. I shall remind him again before Samaldasbhai sees him.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
V. Shankar

Shri U. N. Dhebar
Chief Minister
Saurashtra
Rajkot

Rajkot
30 August 1950

Pujya Sardar Sahib,

I am writing this letter in connection with the prospective discussions at Jamnagar with His Highness the Raj Pramukh and Mr. Menon.

2. You need not worry yourself about the discussions, but there is one difficulty. I think we are giving a position of influence to K. S. Fatesinhji of Limbdi which experience has shown to me so far does not tend to smoothen the problems before us.

3. K. S. Fatesinhji first came on the scene in the Patri matter. He negotiated through the States Ministry over the head of His Highness the Raj Pramukh and the Saurashtra Government. The exception was made in the case of Patri, and Jamnagar decisions were modified to secure the consent of the Patri Durbar. Once again, Patri Durbar has shown arrogance thereafter which does not set a desirable example before his brother rulers.

4. Then K. S. Fatesinhji took up the Gondal matter. You perhaps know the crores of rupees that Gondal has transferred during

the course of the 3 or 4 years preceding integration. He is trying to get the matter reopened in the interest of the Gondal Maharaja.

5. He is also interested in three or four other states with whom a settlement was arrived at [at] Jamnagar in 1948.

6. Without anybody meaning it, K. S. Fatesinhji acquires a position with the rulers of an influential intermediary between the rulers and the States Ministry. I will speak to Menon when he comes here, but I feel that it is my duty to acquaint you with the position and hence this letter. My fear is that unless we deliberately discourage the efforts to reopen the concluded arrangements a time will come when all sacrifices that we went through in Jamnagar in 1948 to settle the privy purse and appropriation questions will go in vain.

7. K. S. Fatesinhji is apparently under the control of His Highness so long as he sits with him, but all along he is manoeuvring to get into the position of a negotiator on behalf of the rulers, which to my mind will [place] the rulers in his basket, with not quite desirable consequences.

With Pranams,

Yours obediently,
U. N. Dhebar

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

New Delhi
28 October 1950

My dear Shankar,

Secretary gave you yesterday Rege's letter in which it is stated that Mr. Dhebar was thinking of resigning after seeing H.M. on the 31st. You wanted to have the file relating to the girasdari problem since Mr. Dhebar had indicated that, among other things, he felt that the States Ministry was making his task difficult by adopting a pro-girasdar attitude in this matter. We have undoubtedly interested ourselves in this problem from time to time as it was an important agrarian problem of Saurashtra having repercussions on the law and order situation. The Jam Saheb had raised the problem with us several times and the giras-dars had sent us representations from time to time. Except recently

when Secretary met girasdars on one or two occasions, we did not encourage them to send any deputations to us. We have expressed our views freely but the policy in this matter has been settled by the Saurashtra Government themselves and we have not asked them at any stage to take any action without their concurrence and consent. Even when, on our advice, a commission was appointed to go into this problem and status quo was maintained in the meantime, we had the approval of the Chief Minister and the Cabinet of the Saurashtra Government to the course which was adopted. You will find a connected account of what happened during the period of one year in Secretary's letter to Mr. Dhebar at Sr. No. (14) in File No. F.1(28)-P/50—Vol.II. As stated in that letter, the Saurashtra Government and ourselves decided to appoint a commission, in the meantime to stay ejectment of tenants and allow the landlords to recover rent equivalent to twice the assessment if they chose to pay it in cash. An ordinance was issued to implement these decisions during the interim period. The ordinance had to be converted into an Act of the Legislature. While considering the draft Bill, two of Mr. Dhebar's colleagues felt that certain amendments should be made in the provisions of the ordinance. If these amendments had been made, the girasdars could have with justification accused the Saurashtra Government and ourselves of breach of promise. Mr. Dhebar, therefore, agreed with us that even if adjustment was necessary after the commission's recommendations were received, for the time being the ordinance should be converted into an Act without any amendment. His colleagues' demands persisted and therefore Mr. Dhebar came to Delhi for discussion on 15 October. He was accompanied by Mr. Rasiklal Parikh and after discussions which the two Ministers had with Menon, they agreed that the ordinance will be converted into an Act without amendments and the position will be reviewed for future harvests after receiving the commission's report which is likely to be available by the end of November 1950. Some discussion took place relating to the rate at which remission would be given in the case of such areas where crops had been damaged by flood or famine and Mr. Rege and Mr. Dhebar agreed to a formula based on the land revenue rules of Bombay which were applicable to Saurashtra. Three or four days ago, Rege telephoned to us that Mr. Dhebar wanted to adopt a formula different from that agreed upon at Delhi and therefore he (Rege) had advised Mr. Dhebar to stick to the decision which had been taken at Delhi on 15 October. Although we have taken interest in this matter and occasionally we have suggested changes

in the policy, Mr. Dhebar should have no reason to think that we have at any stage adopted an attitude which would cause embarrassment to him in any manner. Secretary took an interest in the matter because Dhebar pressed him to study the problem and suggest a permanent solution. There is, therefore, no occasion for Mr. Dhebar to think of quitting office on the basis of any grievance against the Ministry of States. What has happened in fact is that Mr. Dhebar has been greatly worried because he is not having the same easy passage for his policies which he used to have. Samaldas Gandhi and he had differences. Recently Balwantrai Mehta has gone out of the Ministry. His going out has perhaps been a source of weakness. Rasiklal Parikh has also taken an independent line in many matters, so has Manubhai Shah. The result has been as stated by Mr. Dhebar, that his colleagues have started interfering in the revenue policies which, as Chief and Revenue Minister, were the concern of Mr. Dhebar. Since responsibility is joint, his colleagues have undoubtedly a right to put forward their point of view but what must be worrying Mr. Dhebar is that he has studied the problem and therefore his colleagues should have the same measure of faith in his judgment which they had all these years.

In case Mr. Dhebar raises this matter with H.M. and you require the files of his case, I am sending them to you for reference.

I am also attaching the correspondence which took place when Samaldas started criticising Government and Mr. Dhebar came to H.M. for guidance at Dehra Dun in case you need it.

Yours sincerely,
N. M. Buch

V. Shankar, Esqr. ICS
Private Secretary to H.M. (States)
in Camp

Rajkot
2 November 1950

Pujya Sardar Sahib,

You will please remember that during one of my visits to Delhi I had talked on the question of inviting Hon'ble the Prime Minister. The State has been established for the last two years and a half and soon everybody will be plunged into elections. We

have already started two irrigation schemes. In one case the foundation was laid by the then Governor-General, Shri Rajaji, and another foundation was laid by His Highness the Raj Pramukh. We are now undertaking the third scheme, total cost whereof will be nearly Rs 60 lakhs. This scheme will irrigate about 10,000 acres of land in the Central Saurashtra district.

The foundation can be laid any time between 15 November and . . . December.

May I request you to guide me in the matter? -

With Pranams,

Yours sincerely,
U. N. Dhebar

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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State of Saurashtra
Rajkot
20 November 1950

Pujya Sardar Sahib,

May I request your kind attention to my letter of 2 November 1950 on the question of foundation of the Moje Irrigation Works and the invitation to Hon'ble the Prime Minister?

With respects,

Yours obediently,
U. N. Dhebar

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

New Delhi
26 November 1950

My dear Dhebar,

Thank you for your letter dated 20 November 1950. I think it would be a good idea for you to invite the Prime Minister. He will be coming to Ahmedabad for the AICC meeting. I suggest that you arrange for it in connection with that visit.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri U. N. Dhebar
Rajkot

Rajkot
15 November 1950

With the compliments of the Chief Minister, Saurashtra,
Rajkot.

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

Rajkot
15 November 1950

My dear Prime Minister,

We are grateful to you for your analysis of the international situation which appears to be worsening every day with the Chinese thrust in Tibet and the intervention in Korea. It seems our country will very soon be involved in further serious international problems when we have our own internal difficulties to face. We all pray that we may pass through the

period of trial with a stout heart as we did through our troubles in the post-partition period.

2. As you have remarked in your letter, India is committed to a particular attitude and a particular foreign policy once and for all and it is up to us to face boldly the consequences that flow from that policy. Examined from that angle internal conditions assume a decidedly important position. Our greatest weakness is our food position. We have been trying for the last three years to tackle that problem but it appears we are no nearer to a solution thereof. The country is so big, the problem is so formidable and personnel has changed hands so often. It is unquestionable that everybody concerned with this question is trying his level best to do his utmost. Could it be that the failure to tackle this problem has something to do with our failure to capture public imagination, rouse public conscience and create a sense of urgency in the minds of the people? Or, could it be that the backwardness of the people is projecting upon the production and consumption aspects of the problem? There appear to be two definite camps in our country on the question of food and other controls. The Governments, both Central and provincial, have not been able to secure any compromise or a working arrangement between these two camps which is so necessary for the successful working of any democratic programme. This aspect of the problem requires very urgent attention, for an antipathetic mass of the people, ranged on the question of controls solidly against the Government, cannot be relied upon if it continues to function for a long time in that spirit. No Government will be successful in combating this problem unless it touches the vital chord in the heart of the people who appear so disgruntled and therefore so unresponsive perhaps obstructive. Ultimately the success of our food policy will depend upon our capacity to induce or coax our people into playing their part effectively. I do realise that controls cannot be lifted and if controls are to continue, procurement etc. must also continue. My feeling is that unless we have wholehearted, or even the minimum, degree of co-operation from the people, both producers and consumers, we shall not be able to tackle successfully this food problem. We cannot suggest ways and means for securing such co-operation for I have neither the requisite experience, but, we, with others, are looking to you for guidance in this matter. More than half the energy of the provincial Governments today is being consumed by food and civil supplies. Administrative efficiency and administrative purity cannot be had unless this problem is solved. We do not desire to add to your other worries by throwing upon you the responsibility of giving replies to such odd queries. This is only loud thinking.

3. I hinted at our food situation in my last letter. Saurashtra is perhaps the one State which has remained satisfied with 33% allotment of foodgrains this year, of which we have received only one-third! That means we have managed

to subsist with what we could procure plus the 10% of our import needs from outside. We have a month and a half of stock on hand. We have been promised 1,500 tons wheat from the Punjab. It is questionable when we shall receive it. We appreciate the difficulties that the Hon'ble Food Minister is facing and will have to face in the next two months. But our requirements are so small compared to the requirement of other provinces, that I feel it should be possible to keep us just going till the end of December without any noticeable cut in the quotas of other States. I do hope it will be possible to meet our very moderate requirements in this behalf in a reasonable period of time.

4. I am glad to inform you that the losses to the crops on account of locusts have been small. There may be danger from the new breed but all our attention is now concentrated on destroying eggs and the hoppers as they emerge, and I am hopeful that the danger to the winter crops, out of locusts breeding in Saurashtra, will be limited. Much depends, of course, on the success in killing the hoppers which may emerge in the desert areas near Saurashtra.

5. The Legislative Assembly passed on the 24th a Bill giving double assessment to the girasdars from Bhayati cultivators. This Bill became necessary because originally an order to this effect had been issued in April by way of an ordinance and it was constitutionally necessary to re-issue the same orders in the form of an Act. The passage of the Bill was made smooth by the explanation that I gave, particularly to the cultivators, that even if these orders involved hardships, they should be accepted in the interest of a permanent and lasting solution of the girasdari problems. There was at one time some talk of a satyagraha demonstration by the Kheduts in front of the Legislature but wiser counsels prevailed and this was given up. Cultivators are still talking of satyagraha and some sort of organisation in that connection is going on. I am in touch with the leaders of these people and I have not still forsaken the hope of persuading them to drop this idea. It may turn out that as they listened to my advice on the last occasion, they may also listen to my advice on this [occasion] too. If, however, they precipitate a crisis the Government will be set against labour for the first time in its history of 2½ years. Our relations with the peasantry and industrial labour have been so smooth, it is difficult to conceive of any such thing happening. I am hoping that such a contingency will not arise.

6. The Agrarian Commission have completed taking evidence and should be able to give their report before the end of this month. It will then be for the Central Government and this Government to take an early decision on the recommendations made by the commission which will ensure a just solution of this problem, keeping in view the socio-economic needs of the country as a whole and of the girasdari cultivators of Saurashtra in particular.

7. I am in receipt of your letter in connection with the language issue. I think we shall be able to find out a reasonable vocabulary of Hindi terms to be used in our day-to-day administration.

Yours sincerely,
U. N. Dbebar

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister of India
New Delhi

STATEMENT ON LAW AND ORDER

Rajkot
3 March 1950

Of late there has been again a spate of propaganda against the Government in certain papers. It is necessary just to clarify the position on a factual basis in order to show that the propaganda is not based on facts.

An English magazine from Bombay named Atom published a report that a basketful of 600 noses was presented by the dacoits to the Chief Minister of Saurashtra, etc., etc. During the current year the total number of nose-cuttings amounts to 19, and not a single incident of nose-cutting has taken place during the last four months.

Much publicity has been given to the charges of rape and beating by a sub-inspector of police in connection with a dacoity at a village called Gana. Briefly stated the facts are as follows:

Some people organised a gang to kidnap an Ahir girl named Amarbai and kill her parents, but when they assembled for this purpose they decided to commit dacoity in order to get sufficient money to run away after the offence of murder and kidnapping. The dacoity was accompanied by an incident of nose-cutting in order to pass on this dacoity to Visa's gang—a notorious dacoit gang—so that police investigation may be misguided. The sub-inspector of police and the police patel carried out vigorous investigation and unearthed the crime immediately. The guns used in this crime [belonged] to the old Manavadar State and when this was known, police were instructed to trace all the guns as they were of a very good calibre. Three dacoits were arrested immediately and two were absconding. When the fourth dacoit was arrested, he admitted that the cartridges were supplied to him by the wife of one of the dacoits. The sub-inspector called these women for interrogation and a mistake on his part—calling two of them once at night—gave scope for the charge of rape. But there were a number of persons present at the place of investigation. When the attention of the Government

was drawn to these charges, the personal assistant to the IGP was specially sent to make an investigation. He and the District Magistrate reported that the charges of rape were an afterthought and there was no evidence except the statement of these women. Shrimati Pushpaben Mehta, who along with another lady worker had been to this place, also reported that except for the statements of the women they had no evidence. One woman spoke about the rape after 48 hours and the others after 4 or 5 days or even later. So far as the beating was concerned, the police patel, who was mainly responsible for this, has been prosecuted immediately after the first investigation under Sec. 330. Government issued a Press-note stating that the charges of rape were not found to be correct, but even after this certain newspapers—Jai-Hind in Rajkot, Prabhat of Ahmedabad (editor Kakalbhai Kothari)—continued the Press publicity and the sub-inspector therefore approached the Government to give him an opportunity to clear himself in a court of law by permitting him to file a complaint for defamation against the two newspapers concerned. The IGP, therefore, after consulting Government, gave the necessary consent, and the matter is now before a court of law.

The general law and order situation has improved considerably. The main gang of Visa has not been heard of for the last five months. Vigorous efforts are however still [being] made to trace his whereabouts. Of the gang of Dadla nothing has been heard for the last five months, and presumably Dadla is the only person left as many of his associates have been bagged by the police. The only active gang is that of Bhupat, and even he has not committed any crime after 15 January. Vigorous efforts are being made to trace him. His gang is composed of only two persons. All the rest of the dacoits have been traced and nearly 25 persons involved in these dacoities have been arrested and 4 have been killed.

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Home Minister
Saurashtra Government
Rajkot
22 August 1949

My dear Shankar,

When Dhebarbhai was there he was informed of the incident at Kadiyali, near Jafrabad, on the phone. I had been there along with the IGP and I am sending herewith a detailed account of what happened. We are taking special steps in this area in order to trace these dacoits, and I am hopeful that these steps will yield some result within a short time. Will you please put

whatever you think is necessary to be placed before Sardar Sahib from the account that is enclosed herewith?

Yours sincerely,
R. U. Parikh

Shri V. Shankar
Secretary to The Hon'ble
Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
Camp Bombay

ENCLOSURE

Rajkot
22 August 1949

On 18 August 1949, five armed persons came to the village Kadiyali, near Jafabad, and fired gunshots at 17 persons. One of these five persons was one Raning Khuman (of Sokhda village) whose son was murdered about a year back by the Kolis of Kadiyali village. It appears that this Raning Khuman invited Visa Manjaria and his companions to assist him in taking revenge for the murder of his son. They fired shots at any Koli they found in the field and then went to the village. One Koli Kumbha was given blows with a sword and was killed on the spot. In all eleven persons were killed on the spot and out of the remaining seven two died later. Information was sent by the village police of Kadiyali to Jafabad. The police and other men from the public of Jafabad rushed to the spot but the dacoits had left the village before they reached there. The dead and the wounded persons were removed to Jafabad. The gang of these dacoits, while running away from Kadiyali village, passed by another village, Sherna, where they extorted Rs. 1,500 from a Kanbi. The Government having received this information on the 19th, I, along with the Inspector-General of Police and other police officers, proceeded to the spot, consoled the people whose relatives were killed and wounded. From Jafabad hospital two of them were removed to Bhavnagar hospital. Police parties have been sent to various places in pursuit of the dacoits and all possible attempts are being made to arrest the offenders.

The Inspector-General of Police is leading one of such parties in pursuit of the dacoits and all senior officers are charged with the task of tracing the dacoits at all costs.

R. U. Parikh
Home Minister

Home Minister
Govt. of Saurashtra
Rajkot
28 September 1949

My dear Mr. Shankar,

I am sending herewith a copy of the letter written by the Chief Secretary to Mr. Buch in connection with the recent dacoit activities in a part of Gohilwad district. You will kindly show this to Sardar Sahib so that he gets the correct version of the events here.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
R. U. Parikh

Shri V. Shankar
Secretary to The Hon'ble
Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister of India
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

United State of Saurashtra
Home Department
Rajkot
27 September 1949

My dear Buch,

Please refer to your letter dated 26 September 1949.

I am sorry to learn that Sardar Sahib was perturbed over the report which appeared in the Ahmedabad papers and in the Sunday News of India regarding recent [dacoities] and nose-cutting in Saurashtra. Of course there have been incidents of nose-cutting and dacoities in Gohilwad, Central Saurashtra and Junagadh areas, but the report in the Sunday News is not correct and extremely exaggerated. The Press note giving the correct facts is issued by the Government today, a copy of which is enclosed for your information. The main areas in which the dacoits are carrying on their nefarious activities are Bagasara, Kunkavav, Kundla, Rajula, Dedan and Visavadar areas.

Visa Manjaria is one of the men of Rahimtulla's gang. He has collected a few men and formed a gang since 15th May 1949. The following incidents of nose-cutting have occurred:

Date	Village	No. of cases
15-5-49	Vundala	1
31-5-49	Sarambhada	3
7-6-49	Simarana (Under Kundla)	1
"	Karajda "	1
"	Oliya "	1
8-6-49	Hamapar (under Bagasara)	4
10-7-49	Thordi (under Kundla)	1
24-7-49	Dhar	1
3-9-49	Jamwala	1
17-9-49	Juna Savar (under Kundla)	5
Total		19

These areas are chiefly inhabited by Kathis, and the Kathi talukdars are secretly harbouring and otherwise assisting and also instigating the offenders. This Government, therefore, decided to take firm action against those Kathis who are harbouring or otherwise assisting these dacoits. The following actions are being taken:

- (1) To detain those Kathis who are reported to be harbouring or assisting the dacoits under the Public Safety Measures Ordinance.
- (2) To take their estates under management under Regulation No. XXV of 1927.
- (3) To dispossess them of their arms.
- (4) Fix upon them the liability of informing Government of the stay of habitual offenders in villages and also passage of these gangs through their villages.

If they fail to do so stern action will be taken against them. Up till now the estates of 10 such Kathis have been taken under management and about 44 persons are detained. Orders for arresting more Kathis are being issued.

From the protection point of view special police parties are patrolling the affected areas. Infantry sections are stationed at Kundla, Lakhapadar and Visavadar. In order to comb out the whole area about 30 parties of police are to start patrolling in the whole area from 29th. For speedy communication and in order to exchange information and co-ordinating the work of different districts in order to round up the dacoits, wireless stations are installed at Rajkot, Junagadh, Lakhapadar, Visavadar, Una and Veraval.

To secure village defence Government have recently trained village guards and they are being armed. Arrangements are being made to keep chowkies [police posts] in all the villages and instructions have been issued to the police station officers and police patels to keep a watch on all bad characters, and as soon as news is received that a crime has been committed they should immediately check up the presence of such people, and if they are not in the village they should find out where they are.

The police are in close contact with different types of men who give information about the whereabouts of dacoits, but as the crops are now high it gives the dacoits a good shelter for hiding. Moreover, the hilly forests of Girs also afford them sufficient facilities to hide.

Every effort is being made to locate the dacoits and exterminate them. But as the crops are high it is not very easy to locate them. It is only a question of some more time, but you may assure Sardar Sahib that the Government will spare no efforts to exterminate these gangs of dacoits.

A detailed report of the nature of the offences, the area in which they occurred, and the steps taken by the Government is also attached for your information.

Exaggerated Press reports have been responsible for an impression outside that there is a complete breakdown of law and order in this area. Very recently a PTI message gave publicity to eight nose-cuttings in Rampur near Palitana, which had not taken place. [This] news is contradicted.

The Government will need for its combing operation, and also as a precaution against a likely adverse reaction against the Kathis, the help of CRP [Central Reserve Police]. It was for this reason that the Home Minister had written to you a personal letter to extend CRP's stay here. I am now compelled again to request you to arrange for one company of CRP for Saurashtra for a period of four months. I should request you to arrange to send the same company (which was in Junagadh) as it knows our area to a certain extent.

Any suggestions from you will be most welcome.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
V. Isvaran
Chief Secretary

N. M. Buch Esq., ICS
Regional Commissioner
Western India & Gujarat States Region
Rajkot

PRESS NOTE

26 September 1949

A report emanating from Ahmedabad [which] appeared in a Bombay newspaper has quoted persons who have been victims of dacoits, saying that highwaymen in Saurashtra have disfigured no fewer than 150 persons' faces by cutting off their noses and ears. One of the persons has further been reported to have said that the authorities in Gohilwad seem to be helpless and are themselves frightened to trace the culprits. This version is likely to create unnecessary panic in these areas and give wrong impressions about the conditions in these areas. The facts are as follows:

During the year, 23 persons have been victims of the dastardly crime of disfiguring of faces. These crimes have been committed by some remnants of the gang of dacoits Rahimtulla and Surag which was wiped out last year. Certain dacoits are at large and the Saurashtra police have taken steps to destroy these gangs. The entire area that has been disturbed because of these dacoits is being combed out. The standing crops today are giving them opportunity to slip out, but the authorities are confident that the gangs will be destroyed at an early date. Steps have been taken to give protection to cultivators in the disturbed areas by putting police patrols and organising village guards.

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Residency
Rajkot

13 October 1949

CRIME SITUATION IN SAURASHTRA

My dear Shankar,

I am sending for your personal information a copy of a letter I have sent to Vellodi today.

I do not like to trouble H.M. over these matters, but the need of Saurashtra for efficient police officers at the top at the present moment is very great.

Yours sincerely,
N. M. Buch

V. Shankar Esq., 103
Private Secretary to the Hon'ble
Minister for States
1, Aurangzeb Road
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

13 October 1949

My dear Vellodi,

You must have seen from my other communications that the general crime situation in Saurashtra has greatly deteriorated recently. Several dacoit gangs are operating and there is hardly a day [when] some dacoity is not reported. Two days ago a Kathi darbar shot two policemen and [ran] away with their arms. He is supposed to have committed a dacoity yesterday and shot one man. In Jamnagar yesterday a Saurashtra policeman who had been recruited from amongst Sindhi refugees shot dead during day time in the main bazar a Muslim leader, Kasam Sodha, and another Muslim who tried to save him. The constable was apprehended on the spot, and the incident may be the result of the constable losing his head on hearing the stories of harassment of Hindus in Sind.

2. I have discussed with the Home Minister the general situation and the measures which may be adopted to deal with it more effectively. The officering and the organisation of the Saurashtra police force leaves much to be desired. Three out of five district suptds. of police are superannuated retired persons; the IG of Police, Mr. Shirole, is an officer borrowed from the Govt. of Bombay. Originally he came as DIG, but when the IG's post fell vacant he was asked to officiate as the seniormost officer and has continued to be IG since no one else was available. The IG is doing his best, but his past record in Bombay has been very average and there are serious doubts whether he is capable of organising a new police force and handling an abnormal situation such as the one which exists in Saurashtra today. The Home Minister feels that if we can get an adequate IG and a couple of dist. supdts. of police it will greatly facilitate the task of reorganising the police and apprehending the criminals. The Bombay Govt. are likely to say no straight-away to any further demands on them, but I am convinced that the need of Saurashtra for an adequate IG is very great and therefore we should, if necessary, bring pressure to bear through H.M. on the Govt. of Bombay to spare the services of Mr. Pravinsinhji as IG. If, for any reason, he could not be spared, the second best would be Mr. Khot. Mr. Pravinsinhji has the advantage of knowing Saurashtra, intimately knowing those very elements which are at present indulging in lawlessness (he himself is a Gohel Rajput and Lathi, the place from where he comes is in close proximity to the Kathi areas), and he has the confidence of the Saurashtra Govt., the Rulers and, I believe, the people generally. It is also equally important that Bombay

should give two dist. suptds. of police. They will probably offer Mr. Laher, but it would be wrong to send him to Saurashtra having regard to the fact that we had to send him away from Junagadh, although through no fault of his. Who these DSPs could be I cannot say, but if one of them is Mr. S. U. Mehta, who was *Commissioner of Police* till lately in Junagadh, he would have the advantage of knowing the country. The problem here requires such urgent handling that apart from requesting the Bombay Govt. they should be asked to press these officers to come even if they themselves may not be willing.

3. The police force largely consists of those very elements which are giving trouble, and I have a suspicion that some members of the force are themselves acting as informants of the dacoits. There is a certain amount of slackness inherited by the force from the old states and they do not like to be transferred from their homes, and we therefore have got to have officers who are energetic, will inspire confidence and loyalty of the force and have organising abilities.

4. I am fully conscious of the Bombay Governments' difficulties, but we have to make a very serious effort to get these officers. In case, however, no one is coming, I would request that it should not get known that we have asked for a new IG as we do not want the present IG to get dispirited if he is to remain as the head of the police. Even if we get an officer from Bombay, it is intended to keep him in a suitable post and utilise his experience.

Yours sincerely,
N. M. Buch

M. K. Vellodi Esq, ICS
Secretary, Ministry of States
New Delhi

26

Bombay
26 October 1949

My dear Sardar Vallabhbhai,

Your letter of 19 October. I too was feeling very worried on account of the existing crime situation in Saurashtra, but Dhebarbhai gave me the impression when I met him 3 days back that things are now under control and that the position will be all right in a short time.

I am prepared to send Pravinsinhji in place of Shirole, but he is not willing to take up this post, probably because he may find himself in a very embarrassing position on account of his

relations with some chiefs and Kathis, some of whom may be involved in this situation. It would not, therefore, be advisable to send an unwilling officer on this difficult duty. I can, however, send Mr. Kanitkar, who is the next senior man and who is an equally competent officer. He has more driving force and will be able to restore order soon if he is allowed a free hand by the Saurashtra Govt. for six months at least. He is also willing to undertake this task. He did very well in Ahmedabad city last year in two very sensational cases of dacoity.

As regards the other officers mentioned by you, it will not be possible for me to spare any one of them as I have very few efficient men to look after the crime situation in some districts, which are full of potential mischief. I can, however, send one capable DSP, Halavade, who is retiring in a few days. He has been working very well in Satara district, where he succeeded in bringing dacoits to book. I should consider these officers quite capable of meeting the situation in Saurashtra effectively.

I have also asked my DIG, CID, Khot, to go to Amreli and study the situation in Amreli and Saurashtra and submit his report as to what requires to be done to meet the situation effectively at once. He has already gone and will be submitting his report in about a week or 10 days. I shall write to you as soon as I hear from him.

I am feeling much better now, though I am still feeling weak, and hope to be quite well in a few days. Hope you are keeping well and taking the necessary rest.

Yours sincerely,
Morarji Desai

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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New Delhi
29 October 1949

My dear Morarji,

Thank you for your letter of 26 October 1949.

I am very glad to know that you can spare some officers, though not exactly the people or the number we require. I have asked Buch to consult the Saurashtra Government about these two officers and will then let you know.

I am also glad to know that you have already issued instructions to your officers in Amreli and Kodinar to co-operate fully with the Saurashtra officers.

Do please look after yourself and do not [be] in a hurry to overstrain yourself. You know how essential you are for Bombay.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Morarji Desai
Home and Revenue Minister
Government of Bombay
Bombay

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Rajkot
11 November 1949

My dear Shankar,

I am sending herewith a copy of the statement on the law and order position which I gave to Mr. Vellodi when he was here. This is for Sardar Sahib's information. The figures about major crime are at the end of the statement, which show that the situation is not as bad as it has been made out in the Press. The peculiar method of committing crime, especially nose-cutting, has created a scare, but the actual position is better than what it was last year.

Mr. Buch had sent me a copy of the letter which Sardar Sahib wrote to Shri Morarjibhai about giving us a loan of certain police officers. It appears that the Bombay Government cannot give Pravinsinhji, and it may be that Pravinsinhji himself may not be inclined to come. So far as any other man that the Bombay Government offers goes, I spoke to Mr. Buch that unless the man is definitely better than Mr. Shirole there is no point in making a change. Mr. Shirloc, our present IGP, is making all sincere efforts and I personally feel that a change at the present juncture may not be advisable because the new man, even if he is as good as Mr. Shirole, will take time before he gets acquainted with the situation in all its aspects. Mr. Shirole has got the advantage that he had been in Kathiawar previously for about four years and he knows the police officers as also the crime areas in Saurashtra. Our particular requirement is in the cadre of DSP and

sub-inspectors, the position in respect of which has been stated in the statement. It seems that in respect of DSPs Bombay itself is very hardpressed and it is not in a position to offer us suitable men. You may kindly put the broad details of the statement to Sardar Sahib's notice so that his anxiety about the situation here may be eased. We are making all-out efforts to round up the four main gangs as a whole or their individual members, and in the case of one gang we have been completely successful. We hope now that the standing crops are being reaped our efforts will bear some results in a month or two.

Please give my respects to Sardar Sahib.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Rasiklal (Parikh)

Shri V. Shankar
Secretary to
The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

PRESS NOTE

Rajkot

8 December 1949

DACOIT OPERATIONS—OCTOBER, NOVEMBER 1949

After the widespread activities of the dacoit gangs in the months of August and September special measures were undertaken by the Saurashtra police to exterminate the dacoit gangs. By the beginning of October 10 special police parties were posted in the affected areas of Madhya Saurashtra district, 13 parties in Gohilwad district and 14 parties in Sorath district. In the month of November an additional 3 parties were posted in Gohilwad district, 5 parties in Sorath district and one party in Madhya Saurashtra district. The help of the Saurashtra state forces was also indented. Military forces were first posted at Visavadar, Bagasara, Lakhapadar and Kundla. Subsequently the military forces were shifted to Rajula, Dhasa, Lathi, Kunkavav and Babra. Three platoons of the Central Reserve Police were also sent for and they were located at Visavadar and Bagasara. Action was taken to co-ordinate the activities of the Saurashtra police and the Amreli police. Conferences were arranged between the DSP Amreli and

the DSPs of the neighbouring districts in Saurashtra. The Deputy Inspector-General of Police, Bombay, paid a visit to Saurashtra and Amreli towards the end of October to supervise the arrangements made. The Bombay Government sent an additional police force to Amreli for posting special parties at strategic points. Side by side with this police arrangement other action was taken to tighten up control over disorderly elements in the disturbed areas. 109 persons were detained for harbouring dacoits. Jagirs of 12 girasdars were taken under management in order to curb their criminal activities. Village defence corps were organised in the villages in Kundla, Palitana and Jam-Jodhpur talukas. The members of the corps were trained by the civic guards instructor of Jamnagar. Guns were distributed to the trained members. Their activities helped in no small measure to restore confidence in the rural areas. The Home Minister paid two visits to the disturbed areas in October-November. The Chief Secretary paid one visit, as also the Officer Commanding, Saurashtra State Forces. The Inspector-General of Police has been constantly on tour in the disturbed areas.

As a result of these actions taken by Government, a certain measure of success has been achieved in exterminating the dacoit gangs. The Amreli police killed dacoit Rana Mandan and arrested Bhura Kalu. The Sorath police killed Devayat Mulu and Tharan Kandha of Visa's gang. Ismail Gandhi was shot dead by Capt. Vanrajsingh of Saurashtra state forces. The Sorath police also arrested Khant Veja Jasa, a member of Visa's gang. Kathi Aleg, a member of Visa's gang, was killed by the villagers of Janjaria.

In Rajula, the following persons [all of Mahuva district] were arrested:

- 1 Sipai Nanu Chand of Haripara—Chowkidar
- 2 Ghanchi Rehman Gami of Otlea, now in Mahuva
- 3 Ganchi Gami Hal of Valavav, now in Mahuva
- 4 Koli Bhaya Bhima of Jadra Chowkidar
- 5 Koli Kadiya Hada of Rowiya
- 6 Ayer Uka Apa of Sangalia

These gangs had operated in Rajula and Kundla talukas quietly and had remained anonymous by cleverly attributing their misdeeds to Dadla's gang. Gohilwad police also arrested Unad Mala, a member of Visa's gang, Rabari Hamir Nathu, Girasia Chanubha Kalubha, Koli Shamji Ranchhod, Tapubha Keshubha, Rabari Jiva Hader, Bharvad Mongha of Khoda, Bharvad's gang surrendered to the Gohilwad district police.

The criminals involved in the Gana and Vavdi nose-cutting cases have been arrested, and it has been found that these were local criminals and had no connection with the notorious dacoit gangs. The Visavadar police have also arrested persons concerned in the dacoity at Ravni, another dacoity committed by local criminals.

The present position of the five gangs operating in Saurashtra is as follows:

Visa's gang consisted of 8 persons. Out of them 3 have been killed and two have been arrested. There remain 3, including Visa.

Bhupat's gang consisted of 4 persons, out of whom one is arrested. 3 including Bhupat are at large.

Whereabouts of Dadla's gang are not known. They have committed no offence in October & November.

Of Khant gang, Rana Khant was killed and one of his associates Veja was arrested. The third member of the gang is in hiding.

Meraman's gang has not committed any offences after the Ingorala dacoity. One member of the gang has been arrested recently.

V. Isvaran
Chief Secretary
United State of Saurashtra

29

Home Minister
Rajkot
14 December 1949

My dear Shankar,

After the last letter I wrote about the law and order situation there has been considerable improvement in the situation. One complete gang on the Rajula side has been arrested. Of the main gang of Visa, 3 have been killed and one has been arrested. Out of the other gang of two, whose leader was Ismail Gandhi, which was committing crimes, Ismail himself has been killed by Saurashtra police and his other colleague has been arrested by Amreli police. Of the Khant gang, the leader has been killed and one is arrested, with the result that the third man has disappeared and become dormant. During the last month the number of dacoities committed was 4, and during this month so far no dacoity has been committed.

I am enclosing a Press Note issued in the first week of December 1949 stating the whole position. Will you please put the broad facts of this statement to Sardar Sahib for his information? Three of Visa's gang and 3 of Bhupat's gang now remain and it is hoped that the operations planned to destroy these people will not take long to fructify.

Please give my respects to Sardar Sahib and Shrimati Maniben.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Rasiklal

Shri V. Shankar,
Secretary to
The Hon'ble Shri Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
Government of India
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

NOTE

Chief factors which have played an important part in moulding the law and order situation in Saurashtra are:

- (1) The gangs of dacoits
- (2) The refugee problem
- (3) The communal disturbances
- (4) The labour problem
- (5) The *girasdars'* agitation because of the *gharkhed* ordinance

Out of these, all except No. 1 are problems which have arisen recently in Saurashtra. The first one is not a new feature in the history of Kathiawar. A glance [at] the past history, and particularly of the last 30 years for which record is easily available, shows that the gangs of Vaghers, Miyanas, Kathis and others in the areas at present comprising the Central Saurashtra, Gohilwad and Sorath carried on their operations as dacoits and outlaws. In the year 1920 or so Ramvala's gang operated in the areas of Kundla, Lakhapadar, Amreli and Dhari and Babra's side (now in Gohilwad district except Amreli and Dhari). In the years 1921 to 1925 Miyana's gang of Sangan and Mulu carried on their depredations on Morvi and Panchal side, and some of the parts of Liliya (now forming parts of Central Saurashtra and Gohilwad) and Rajula and Junagadh. From 1928 to 1930, 4 *Makranies* from Jamnagar Infantry devastated parts of Gondal, Vasavad, Babra and Halar side. Kathi Naga Dhandhal's gang devastated the parts of Lakhapadar, Kundla, Liliya and Dedan now comprising the Gohilwad area. In 1932, Sindhi Kasam Lakha's gang devastated the portions of old Gondal State for a period of five years. Zinia's gang lasted about a decade in Junagadh State. The gangs of Habib and Sultan carried on depredations in Babra, Vasavad, Kundla, Bagdana and Dhari areas. The gang of Ram Manjaria, Hayat Khan, and Govind Soni devastated portion of Palitana, Rajula,

Mahuwa, Babra, Lathi and Kundla from 1941 to 1943. The Sindhi gang of Sodhana and Vadhana started operations in 1944 and carried on depredations for three years in the areas of Gondal, Bagasara, Kundla and some parts of Porbandar. Sukha's gang, which operated in Bhal, Songadh, Kundla, was exterminated in 1948 by the Saurashtra police. Champa's gang devastated portion of Kundla, Rajula, Nageshri and Mahuwa for about one year in 1947-48 and was exterminated by the Saurashtra police. Rahimtulla's gang was [founded] in the year 1948 and extended its operation in Kundla, Lakhapadar, Nagesbri, Babra, Liliya and Junagadh areas. It was exterminated in February 1949 by the Saurashtra police. It will thus be seen from the areas of operation of the outlaws and dacoits in Kathiawar were chiefly the areas at present comprising Central Saurashtra, Gohilwad and Sorath. It is the same old area in which the law and order situation cannot be said to be normal. In the past there were a number of independent states having independent jurisdiction, and as such co-ordinated efforts were not possible as each state had its own interest to look to. As the people of the area showed no concern for states other than their own, the gravity of the situation was neither appreciated nor made known to the same degree to which it is now appreciated. Gangs of dacoits committing offences from one state used to take shelter in the territories of neighbouring states. The Baroda area was mostly used as a base of operation by these gangs. Even after the formation of the United State of Saurashtra, although the old states of Kathiawar were integrated, the problem regarding Baroda remained the same. The Saurashtra Government drew the attention of the Baroda police, and subsequently the Government of Bombay after Baroda's merger with Bombay, and the Government of Bombay has been fully co-operating with the Saurashtra Government. But inevitably time is bound to pass before the new officers are able to fully know the situation in all its aspects. But officers and men of both areas are now co-operating fully. After the extermination of Rahimtulla's gang in February 1949 it was felt that Saurashtra would be free from most heinous offences that were perpetrated by him, i.e. nose-cutting, but Visa Manjaria, who had joined Rahimtulla in his depredations from the beginning and remained in hiding for about 3 months, came out with the Gundala nose-cutting on 15 May 1949. Visa's gang has since committed the following offences of nose-cutting:

15-5-49: Nose of Kanbi Mohan Bhagwan of Gundala was cut and property worth Rs. 900 was taken away.

31-5-49: Noses of 3 Kanbis of Sarambadi village were cut. No property was taken.

7-6-49: The gang cut the nose of Kanbi Hardas of Simran under Kundla police station. The gang cut the noses of 5 Kanbis of Oliya under Kundla police station.

8-6-49: Noses of 4 Kanhis of Hamapar under Bagasara police station were cut.

24-7-49: The noses of Patel Nagji of Dhar under Kundla police station was cut and his mare worth Rs. 300 was taken away.

3-9-49: Cut the nose of Meghji of Jamwala and took away property worth Rs. 600.

17-7-49: Cut the noses of 5 persons at Juna Savar village under Kundla police station and took away a mare and property worth Rs. 12,000.

The following are the members of his gang:

1. Visa Ram Manjaria of Gadhia Patla under Lakhapadar police station
2. Abhel Visa Gida of Gundala under Mendarda police station
3. Jethsur Hathia Lahu of Navania under Bilkha police station
4. Apa at Mera Manasia and two others
5. Raning Khuman of Sherna village under Nageshri police station
6. Khant Vija of Nagdala

There were other gangs also operating during the year, viz. 'Bhupat's gang, Rana Mandan's gang, Aher Meram of Kotia's gang, Bauddin Lakha and Dadla's gang. The area of operation of these gangs is chiefly the portions of Central Saurashtra, Gohilwad and Junagadh, which is the same area which has been in the past the extent of operation of gangs of dacoits in Kathiawar.

BHUPAT'S GANG

Bhupat was originally a servant of Vaghania Darbar and was in Arzi Hakumat. He is 35 years of age. His photo has been distributed to all police stations and parties posted. Bhupat originally belongs to Barvala under Bagasara police station and he is a good sportsman and a driver too. He started his career as a private servant of Vaghania Darbar in 1947. He also joined Arzi Hakumat and took part in that operation. Really speaking, as he was in very good touch with the local area, [he] is harboured in all the villages round about Barvala. He started his career by committing the murder of a patel of Najapara. His associates are as under:

- 1 Rajput Bhupat Meruji of Barvala
- 2 Aher Rana Bhagwan of Najapara
- 3 Bhagu Bechar of Chavan under Damnagar police station
- 4 Devayat Mulu of Khas under Ranpur police station
- 5 Hamit Jebalia of Chital
- 6 Aher Mesur of Navania under Bilkha police station

Bhupat's areas of activities are the police stations of Bilkha, Bagasara, Babra, Lathi, Liliya and Chital. Bhupat does not resort to nose-cutting and

generally takes the way of terrorising villagers and by scaring them away commits dacoities. As special parties of police and military have been posted in and around the affected areas, he has gone into hiding and has not been heard of anywhere since 4-10-49.

RANA MANDAN'S GANG

The gang of Rana Mandan with about six associates started on their career on or about 5-6-1949 when they committed Borvav dacoity on 5-6-1949. Thereafter they committed about six dacoities in the Gir area under Junagadh, but due to heavy pressure of police efforts three of them have been arrested and the leader Rana Mandan has been shot dead at Khadadhar under Khambha police station very [recently].

AHER MERAM OF KOTLA'S GANG

Under Bagdana police station. Meram originally belonged to Kotia and is about 35 years of age with elephantiasis of one leg. He began his career as a cattle-lifter and bootlegger. His activities first came to notice when he committed robbery at Kantrodi and committed about seven offences of dacoity and robbery in and around the Bagdana, Mahuva and Liliya police stations. Four of his associates have already been arrested with a part of the Mudamal of the dacoities committed by the gang. At present, he has gone underground and is taking shelter in Gir forest to avoid arrest.

GANG OF BAUDDIN LAKHA AND DADLA

On or about April 1949 a theft of Rs. 14,000 was committed at Dolia village under Rajula police station. Bauddin and Dadla were strongly suspected as having been concerned with the offence. Police Inspector Juvansingh was on the track of these persons. The police officer was shot dead at Rajula Road station on 23 May 1949, and since then the gang is carrying on its depredation. Dadla was formerly moving with the then station officer, Rajula, and as such is thoroughly acquainted with the mode and method of police working. He has committed 13 offences of either dacoity or robbery. He has cut the noses of 3 persons. His activities extend to the borders of Rajula, Kundla and Mahuva. Sub-Inspector Ranjitsingh from Halar district, who is well acquainted with the area, has been posted with a party of 10 constables on special duty to arrest him. Jamadar, Rajula, has also been posted on special duty to round up the gang. Dadla has a .410 gun taken away from a constable. As his activities had increased very recently to a larger extent, special parties of military and police have been posted at strategical points to round him up. Due to untiring efforts of the police, one of his associates Ismail has been shot dead at Matiala by Amreli police.

At present in order to deal effectively with the dacoit operations military and landers from Saurashtra forces have been placed at Lakhapadar, Bagasara, Visavadar, Kundla, Rajula, Lathi, Dhasa and Babra. Over and

above this, special parties, each consisting of one head constable and 9 constables foot police and one head constable and 7 constables mounted police, have been placed at 40 strategic points in the areas affected by these gangs, that is, police stations of Mahuva, Rajula, Kundla, Liliya, Lathi, Jafraabad, Nageshri, Babra, Bagasara, Visavadar, Una, Akolvadi and Talaja. Wireless sets have been established at Rajkot, Visavadar, Junagadh, Una, Veraval, Kundla and Lakhapadar to exchange information. Military wireless sets have been established at Lathi, Rajula, Kundla to exchange information.

In spite of strenuous efforts made by the police, the efforts to round up the gangs which have since the last few months ravaged the major portion of Gohilwad, Junagadh and some portion of Madhya Saurashtra, committing offences of a most heinous nature, have proved unsuccessful. It is not, however, without reasons. The peculiar political and geographical situation obtaining in Kathiawar has made it difficult for the police to exterminate the gangs of dacoits. The area mentioned above is full of mountains, rivers, gorges, hills and forests and it gives the dacoits ample scope to hide themselves for a number of days. The standing crops during the present season is also an obstacle in the way of the police. It may also be added that Saurashtra had a bad legacy. With the integration of various small states and talukas the men absorbed in the police force were hardly worth the name. Barring some first and second class states, most of the personnel were nothing more than manual labourers of a very poor calibre who had practically no idea of discipline, responsibility and handling of arms. The authorities had practically no time to train up these men at headquarters. Hands were full over and above ordinary crime with labour, agrarian, election, refugees and so many other serious problems from the very start of the new state and the police force had to be utilised to cope with the unforeseen situation created by the birth of the democratic state. The force also lacked in well-trained officers and Government had to promote officers from the ranks to man officers' posts. There was no machinery worth the name of Saurashtra [to provide a] basis for getting information and working it up. It is being organised, again with the poor material at hand.

It is an admitted fact that the village police are the backbone of the law and order administration in the rural areas. The different states of Kathiawar had varying systems of village police organisation, and even that was neglected for the purpose of crime work. The new state was faced with the task of reorganising this village police, bringing some uniformity and efficiency into it, and this work is being attended to but will take a little time before this force is brought to a certain level of efficiency.

With the change from foreign domination to freedom and from feudal society to the democratic-social organisation, certain social friction is bound to arise as a result of the new social policy and the programmes to carry out

that policy. One of the items of this programme creating widespread social upheaval is tenancy legislation. The new Government, immediately after being installed, took certain steps which disturbed the existing relations between girasdars and tenants, and as elsewhere the dissatisfied girasdars have directly or indirectly supported the anti-social elements. Investigation of the recent crimes has revealed that most of the harbourers of the dacoits have been Kathi girasdars and their men, and the destruction of the gangs has been delayed because of the aversion of these elements to help the Government. The local disputes between the cultivators and the girasdars because of the raised hopes on the part of the cultivators have also raised the figure of crimes in other areas. In spite of all these factors, the police have made untiring efforts and are working with great zeal. The work that they have done up till now, looking to their calibre and training, deserves appreciation. The Government tried to make good the shortage of officers and trained men by getting men from Bombay, but the Bombay Government could not lend officers except the IGP and one or two Dy. SPs. Almost all our DSPs are retired persons and only a few of the Dy. SPs are trained for that post. Similarly, out of the sub-inspectors' cadre a very small percentage of officers have been properly trained. The Government, with the help of the Bombay Government, have intensified their programme of training, and it is expected that within a couple of years we will be able to get trained sub-inspectors and Dy. SPs from the Nasik Training School. (See figures at the conclusion of note.)

At convenient intervals, the IGP is holding conferences of police officers in charge of dacoit operations and the DSP, Amreli district, is present by invitation. A conference was also held with the officers of the state forces, where details regarding how the state forces could be utilised were settled.

Recently, at our request, the IGP, Bombay, sent the DIG, CID, Bombay, to tour Amreli district, as also the adjoining Saurashtra areas to get fuller knowledge of the situation and to discuss steps which we consider necessary to be taken in Amreli district. He saw the Chief Secretary and the Home Minister and [reported] what he saw on his tour. He said that the steps taken by the Saurashtra [police] were more than adequate and he actually found police in places where he did not expect them to be, looking to the difficulties of the terrain. He also was satisfied with the way the police were working. He mentioned that in Bombay Province also it used to take them a long time to exterminate organised gangs of dacoits.

The accompanying statements of crime committed during this and the previous year will show that the situation is actually better than what it was last year. But the peculiar method of committing crime, especially nose-cutting, has created a scare both inside and outside the state and the Government has taken a very serious view of the situation created thereby and has been tackling the problem by making all-out efforts.

[These] steps were taken to assure the rural public:

- 1 Military forces were posted in the disturbed areas.
- 2 Vigorous police patrolling was arranged. Forty special police parties have been posted at different places.
- 3 Village defence has been organised through non-official source in one sub-division.
- 4 Higher police officials tour the area continuously.

The Home Minister has also made three tours and the Chief Secretary has made one tour.

The rural public today has a better feeling of security than 3 months ago due to the above action taken by Government.

Regarding the steps taken to combat the dacoits and the harbourers, the letter written by the Chief Secretary to the Regional Commissioner is attached herewith, along with the Press Note issued on the September 26th.

Home Minister

2 November 1949

STATEMENT OF ROBBERIES AND DACOITIES COMMITTED IN THE UNITED STATE OF SAURASHTRA IN THE YEARS 1948 AND 1949

(9 months each year)

District	Dacoities		Robberies	
	1948	1949	1948	1949
Central Saurashtra	36	26	83	62
Zalawad	9	3	35	19
Hatar	33	2	41	17
Gohilwad	25	33	172	101
Junagadh	34	31	49	59
Total	137	95	380	258

There are in all 159 posts of sub-inspectors. Out of these, only 13 have received sub-inspector's training at PTS, Nasik. Nine are trained in Baroda PTS, and 9 in Junagadh. It is well known that neither Baroda nor Junagadh bear any comparison with Nasik. However, taking both Baroda and Junagadh, we have got 31 trained sub-inspectors out of 159.

Similarly, in the cadre of Dy. SPs, out of 13 sanctioned posts, only two are Nasik-trained and the rest are promoted. To make good this handicap, after the formation of the union we have sent in all 52 boys to Nasik PTS for sub-inspector's training course and 8 for Dy. SP's training course. We

propose to send during the current year and the next year the same number of boys for training, so that after 2 to 3 years almost all the officers will have received proper training.

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Savoy Hotel
London

7 September 1950

My dear Sardar Sahib,

Could you spare me a few minutes when I come to Dehli? I am anxious to discuss some personal matters with you. When I last talked with you business matters, you were kind enough to tell me that matters of detail in individual cases such as my own should be discussed with the Secretary of the States Ministry. I have taken your advice and kept Mr. V. P. Menon fully informed of the difficulties I am experiencing; but in certain instances, these difficulties have not disappeared, even after he has personally communicated with the local officers in Kutch! There are, indeed, "wheels within wheels" there, which I should like to explain to you; some of these officers have, I am afraid, ancestral grudge against my house, which changed circumstances, leaving them in power gives them an opportunity to work off against me.

The most serious thing from my own point of view, is the harm that can be done to frank and cordial relations between your ministry and myself. Unless these local intrigues are checked, and with good will on both sides, coupled with your own sense of justice, when you are fully seized of all the facts, I am quite sure that the difficulties I am experiencing at the moment will vanish. They ought not, indeed, to exist at all because all outstanding questions were settled with the Adviser and the Joint Secretary to the Ministry of States, as clearly stated in their letter of 22 February 1949, which provided that, there should be no reopening of preceding facts accomplis.

May I raise this further point? Ever since the change of the administration, I have felt an atmosphere of strain and tension, which indeed affects my nerves and health when I am in Kutch. I am not a difficult person to deal with; yet I seem to be subjected to constant pinpricks or studied neglect by the local authorities. If it is not one thing, it is the other. In spite of the fact that I have tried to adapt myself to the changed circumstances, to the best of my ability, my presence in my ancestral State, as a former

ruler, however careful I am, does not make life any easier for me; perhaps it is possible that it does not make things any easier for the local authorities also! But I wish that they did not allow these difficulties to influence them in their dealings with me and my family, particularly over matters sanctioned by tradition and privileges hitherto enjoyed.

I expect to arrive in New Delhi on the 25th instant, and shall hope to meet you, if you are there, within the next day or two.

May I hope to have the pleasure of welcoming you to Kutch this coming cold weather and showing you hospitality a few days? The opening ceremony of Kandla Port will, I hope, provide the occasion.

With best wishes, and with sincere hope that you are keeping fit and well,

Yours sincerely,
Madan Singhji
of Kutch

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

31

Camp Bombay
13 September 1950

My dear Maharao Sahib,

Thank you for your letter of 7 September 1950.

I am not aware of any misunderstanding having been caused between the States Ministry and yourself by the machinations of any interested persons. You can depend on us to look at matters objectively and you can unburden yourself without reserve when we meet in New Delhi on Your Highness' return from abroad.

I should like to say, however, that we expected some gesture from Your Highness during the time of the recent floods in Kutch. In this respect, I might cite to Your Highness the instance of His Highness the Maharaja of Morvi who made a handsome donation when recently the whole of Saurashtra was affected by floods.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Highness
Maharao Madan Singhji
Maharao of Kutch
C/o Savoy Hotel
London

Bhuj-Kutch
16 October 1950

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I was very glad to have had an opportunity of meeting you in Delhi.

On my return here, I have asked the Chief Commissioner to furnish me with information regarding the damage done by the floods as well as the extent thereof and the measures planned and taken up to now to relieve the suffering of the flood-stricken people. On receipt of the above information, I will personally visit the affected areas and meet the people in order to be of such service to them as may be possible.

I have also invited the Chief Commissioner to accompany me when I go to visit the affected places, if he can. May I assure you that I will do all I can for ameliorating the lot of flood-stricken people?

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Madan Singhji

New Delhi
23 October 1950

My dear Maharao Sahib,

Thank you for your letter of 16 October 1950.

I am very glad to know that Your Highness is thinking of visiting the affected areas in Kutch. I am sure the Chief Commissioner will give Your Highness every assistance.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Highness
The Maharao of Kutch
Bhuj-Kutch

Lal Bagh

Indore

23 August 1950

My dear Shankar,

I have read in the newspapers that Shri Sardar Sahib Patel will be coming to Indore on 2 October to lay the foundation-stone of Kasturbagram.

It will be a pleasure and privilege to me and Her Highness if Shri Sardar Sahib and Srimati Maniben would give us the pleasure of staying with us during their visit to Indore.

If the newspaper report is correct, I should be glad if you will be so kind as to ascertain Shri Sardar Sahib's wishes in the matter and kindly let me know so that I may write to him personally to invite him.

I hope this finds you and your family quite well.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Tukoji Rao Holkar

Shri Vidya Shankar, ics

New Delhi

26 August 1950

My dear Maharaja Sahib,

Thank you for your letter of 23 August 1950.

2. I have consulted Sardarji about Your Highness' invitation to him to stay with you during his visit to Indore. He has asked me to thank Your Highness for the same, but arrangements for his stay will be made most probably at the Residency.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
V. Shankar

His Highness
Maharaja Tukoji Rao Holkar
Ex-Maharaja of Indore
Lal Bagh, Indore

TELEGRAM

Camp State Hotel
Aurangabad
3 October 1950

Shri Gopikrishna Vijaivargiya
Chief Minister
Indore

PLEASE ISSUE FOLLOWING STATEMENT TO PRESS ON MY BEHALF. BEGINS. DURING MY TWO DAYS' STAY IN INDORE, I LAID STRESS BOTH IN PRIVATE AND IN PUBLIC ON THE NEED FOR AN EARLY SOLUTION OF THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE OF MADHYA BHARAT HAD TO FACE DURING RECENT MONTHS. ABOVE ALL, THE PRIMARY NEED OF MADHYA BHARAT IS A STABLE ADMINISTRATION. I AM GLAD THAT MY APPEAL TO THE CONGRESS WORKERS AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC FOR THEIR HELP AND COOPERATION MET WITH A QUICK RESPONSE, AND JUST BEFORE I LEFT INDORE I WAS ASSURED BY THE LEADING PERSONALITIES IN MADHYA BHARAT CONGRESS OF GOOD PROSPECTS OF A STABLE ADMINISTRATION COMING INTO BEING AS A RESULT OF THE INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS WHICH WERE HELD DURING THE LAST TWO DAYS. THE PICTURE OF MADHYA BHARAT WHICH I VISUALISED AT THE TIME OF INTEGRATION AND WHICH I DESCRIBED TO MY AUDIENCE YESTERDAY AT THE PUBLIC MEETING REQUIRES A GREAT DEAL OF CONCENTRATED EFFORTS AND UNITED ENDEAVOUR BEFORE IT CAN MATERIALISE. WE HAVE TO GET ON WITH THE JOB AND TIME IS FLYING. WE MUST PROVE TO THE PEOPLE THAT WE MEAN BUSINESS AND THAT, IN SPITE OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED SO FAR, A GREAT DEAL CAN BE ACHIEVED. IT IS IN THAT HOPE [and] CONFIDENCE THAT I HAVE AGAIN PUT SOME TRUST IN MY OLD FRIENDS AND FELLOW-WORKERS OF MADHYA BHARAT CONGRESS. I APPEAL TO THEM ALL TO LIVE UP TO THESE HOPES, TO STAND BY THE ADMINISTRATION AND TO EXTEND TO THE NEW CHIEF MINISTER AND HIS COLLEAGUES THAT SYMPATHY, SUPPORT AND CO-OPERATION WHICH THEY WILL NEED IN FULL MEASURE IN THE DISCHARGE OF THEIR ONEROUS RESPONSIBILITIES. LET THEM GIVE TO THE INSTITUTION AND TO MADHYA BHARAT WHAT THEY HAVE NEEDED ALL ALONG AND APPLY THEMSELVES WHOLEHEARTEDLY WITHOUT RESERVE TO THE IMMENSE CONSTRUCTIVE TASK THAT AWAITS THEM. LET THEM

HAVE THE PRIDE AND PRIVILEGE WHICH THE BUILDER HAS IN THE COMPLETION OF A MAGNIFICENT BUILDING. THE GLORY OF THAT ACHIEVEMENT AND NOT PLACES OF POWER AND AUTHORITY WILL BE THEIR BEST REWARD. I ALSO APPEAL TO THE PUBLIC NOT TO LISTEN TO THE VOICE OF DESTRUCTION OR OF SUBVERSION, BUT INDULGE IN HEALTHY CRITICISM TO ADOPT AN ATTITUDE OF HELPFUL COOPERATION IN ALL USEFUL UNDERTAKINGS. IT IS ONLY WHEN PUBLIC OPINION THINKS AND ACTS ON RESPONSIBLE LINES THAT IT IS MOST EFFECTIVE. NO GOVERNMENT, HOWSOEVER POWERFUL, CAN AFFORD TO NEGLECT THE VOICE OF DISCIPLINED AND RESPONSIBLE PUBLIC OPINION, AND THE GOVERNMENT OF MADHYA BHARAT WILL NOT FAIL THEM. ENDS.

VALLABHBHAI

37

TELEGRAM

Camp State Hotel
Aurangabad
3 October 1950

His Highness Raj Pramukh
Indore

PLEASE ACCEPT FOR YOURSELF AND CONVEY TO HER HIGHNESS MY SINCERE ORATITUDE FOR YOUR VERY KIND HOSPITALITY DURING OUR STAY IN INDORE. YOUR HIGHNESS DID NOT SPARE YOURSELF TO MAKE IT COMFORTABLE AND WE ALL THOROUGHLY ENJOYED IT DESPITE A VERY STRENUOUS PROGRAMME. PLEASE CONVEY OUR THILANKS ALSO TO YOUR OFFICERS AND STAFF WHO CONTRIBUTED TOWARDS THE SUCCESS OF OUR VISIT.

VALLABHBHAI

38

TELEGRAM

Indore
4 October 1950

The Honourable Saradar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
Aurangabad

WE WERE BOTH DELIGHTED TO RECEIVE YOUR KIND TELEGRAM. IT WAS A PLEASURE AND PRIVILEGE TO US TO DO WHAT WE COULD AND WE FEEL THAT IT HARDLY DESERVES MENTION. WE ARE HAPPY TO KNOW THAT YOU ENJOYED YOUR SHORT STAY HERE IN PITE OF THE

STRENUOUS PROGRAMME. WITH kindest regards from my wife and self.

SCINDIA

39

TELEGRAM

Gwalior

16 September 1950

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Gandhinagar
Nasik

REGRET VERY MUCH INABILITY ATTEND SESSION OWING SUDDEN ILLNESS
THOUGH HAD EXPRESSED DESIRE TO MEET YOU AT NASIK. HAVE HOW-
EVER ASKED SHRI LILADHARJI TO SEE YOU. IF THERE IS ANY CON-
TROVERSIAL VIEW; ALSO KINDLY INVITE SHRI PANDIVA AND SHRI
RAMSAHAI SIMULTANEOUSLY.

GOPIKRISHNA VIJAYVARGIYA

distressed me beyond words to find that the persons and the party on which I had built so many hopes have not been able to deliver the goods. Not only that, the prestige of Government has, as a result of recent events, been shaken to such a degree that, unless immediate steps are taken to put matters right, I am afraid a serious challenge to good and stable administration would develop and law and order may be jeopardised to such an extent as to invoke the emergency powers which have been vested in the Central Government. It is, therefore, with a full sense of responsibility that I am asking the party to reflect on the developments which have taken place and to set its own house in order once for all. It is only in this that lies the prestige and honour of the organisation, to which we all have the honour to belong, the good name of the State to whose service all of you are pledged and the good government to which the people at large are entitled from you.

My talks with the Chief Minister and other Ministers, and president of the State Congress and some other friends, whom I have met, convince me that a great deal of harm has already been done to the organisation as well as to the Government by internal cliques and sectional or personal loyalties. Even the crisis, through which the State as well as the organisation are passing at the present moment, has accentuated, rather than eliminated, the differences and divisions which had marked the party organisation. Such a manifestation is almost fatal to the prestige and standing of any party. Those who do not realise the gravity of the situation or who do not see the extent of evil that they have wrought by indulging in these destructive tactics, are not being true to themselves or doing a service to the organisation and the people to whom they owe so much. I would, therefore, make an appeal to you all to rise above these petty intrigues to come together in an hour of common peril and to meet the challenge which has been thrown at you by other parties by coming together in a common endeavour. Nothing else does the occasion demand of you and *nothing else can you do if you wish to turn the present into a basis for a useful future.* After all, you have to bear in mind that it will not be very long before you shall have to meet your masters, the electorate, whose confidence you have to win if you wish to have another spell of office or administration. From what I have heard or read or experienced of the public opinion in this State, I can tell you quite frankly that, unless you make a drastic bid for improvement and reform in your conduct, you will only find a sick electorate taking its own course to put matters right.

In whatever you decide, you must bear in mind this great responsibility on behalf of an organisation which has built up its prestige and honour on *self-sacrifice and unselfish public service and on a heroic struggle with the evil of foreign domination.* All that that organisation stands for or has achieved is at stake in Madhya Bharat, and you happen to be its custodians so far as this part of India is concerned.

My demand on you at this critical time is simple. It is to evolve a stable ministry which will, with the unanimous, or if that is not possible, general party support, be able to withstand the present crisis which has overtaken the administration and organisation in Madhya Bharat and which will, during the months that lie ahead of you, convince the people at large that they can put faith in you and the organisation to which you all belong. I should also like you to stand four-square with a united will and determination against all those forces which threaten not only your unity, but also the very elementary basis of good and orderly government. When you deliberate this evening, I should like you to concentrate on all this, to realise your responsibility and to conduct yourself in full realisation of that responsibility. You should not approach your task with any small mind; you have to take a comprehensive and far-sighted view and rise above all those petty and extraneous matters, which cloud one's judgment, retard one's progress and promote that narrow parochial outlook which is the very antithesis of democracy. I do not wish in the least to influence your judgment by indicating any preferences of my own for any one individual. In fact, I have none, except for whosoever commands your unstinted confidence and support. My only concern is that whatever you decide, you must decide with a will and determination to stand by your decision through thick and thin.

I have been told that, when you met yesterday, you were good enough to postpone matters until I could indicate to you what I felt about these things and suggest some way out. I have told you what I feel, but I think that it is for you yourself to find a way out. That burden is not one which it would be either fair on your part or democratic on mine that I should take upon myself. I have told you what the present position is and what your duty is. It is now for you to discharge it as the occasion demands. I hope that, when I meet you all tomorrow, you will have come to your own decision in the light of the views which I have placed before you.

40

New Delhi
5 October 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Even in the printed report, your Indore speech was touching. In the actual spoken word it must have been so greatly moving. You have done all one can do. If even this does not satisfy people's suspicions, what can man do! Let us pray and leave things to the Power that has so far protected us in spite of all our errors and our sins.

I noted Tandonji's very good pronouncement in Calcutta about Muslims in India.

I hope you are taking care of your health.

My kind regards to Mr. and Mrs. Vellodi.

Yours affectionately,
G. Rajagopalachari

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
Camp : Hyderabad

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Gwalior
26 September 1950

My dear Sardar,

I have received your letter regarding Dr. Devi Singh and Krishna Kant Vyas, members recently elected to Parliament.

I am sorry that owing to preoccupations here, I could not reply earlier. However, I had requested Babu Ramsahaiji to talk to you personally about this and explain the whole matter. But I have learnt from him that he forgot to talk to you on this subject. However, I am trying to get full information and shall inform you about facts, at an early date.

With best regards,

Yours sincerely,
G. K. Vijaivargiya

The Hon'ble Sardar Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

42

Lucknow
20 November 1950

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I have to thank you for your letter of 16 November regarding certain revenue and police officers needed for Madhya Bharat and Rajasthan. As you know, at present the administration is being conducted with attenuated personnel and the number of

experienced officers has dwindled considerably. We have parted with some of our best men so that the system of administration in the States may be brought in line with our own. Still I fully realise that they are part of our Union and it is the duty of all of us to help them to the maximum extent we can. I am making enquires and giving thought to the suggestions made by you. I shall be going to Delhi shortly and will then have the opportunity of speaking to you in this connection personally. I am not sure if we will be able to spare the officers named by you but I shall naturally give due regard to your wishes before sending my final reply.

Yours sincerely,
G. B. Pant

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

43

Lalehzar Palace
Cambay
12 October 1950

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I am informed that you are paying a visit to Ahmedabad and Anand towards the end of this month. While at Anand, you will be so near Cambay. I will feel honoured if you can make it convenient to pay a short visit to Cambay also on that occasion. I shall consider it a personal pleasure and privilege if you can bless Cambay with your visit and stay with me as my guest. If you find it convenient to accept my request, as I hope you will, I may kindly be informed. I need hardly assure you that I will make all the necessary arrangements to suit your convenience. Your visit to Cambay will also offer a long cherished opportunity to the people to pay their respects to you.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
M. Hussain Yawar Khan

The Hon'ble Sardar V. J. Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

New Delhi
16 October 1950

My dear Nawab Sahib,

Many thanks for your letter of 12 October 1950 and your very kind invitation to me to visit Cambay. I regret that for reasons of health I have had to cancel my Gujarat tour except a visit to Ahmedabad where also I am having only a minimum of public engagements. I am, therefore, very sorry it will not be possible for me to accede to your request, much as I would have liked to.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

H.H. Nawab Mirza Hussain Yawar Khan
Nawab Sahib of Cambay
Lalehzar Palace
Cambay

TELEGRAM

Jamnagar
16 October 1950

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

BY GRACE OF GOD AND YOUR LOVE FOR JUSTICE HAS GIVEN HAPPY OCCASION TO HOUSE OF SIROHI TO CELEBRATE SUCCESSION OF RIGHTFUL HEIR ON DUSSERAH. HUMBLY REQUEST YOUR HONOUR TO CLORIFY OCCASION BY YOUR PRESENCE. IS KEEN DESIRE MY MOTHER AND MYSELF. HOPE YOU WILL NOT DISAPPOINT US. EVERY BEST WISHES.

GULABKUNVER
MAHARANI OF JAMNAGAR

New Delhi
23 October 1950

My dear Maharani Sahiba,

Many thanks for your telegram of 16 October and your very kind invitation to me to come to Sirohi to be present at the succession ceremony. I am very sorry that, for reasons of health, it was not possible for me to do so. I have, however, sent the new Maharao my best wishes, through the Rajmata.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Her Highness
Maharani Gulabkunverba
Maharani of Jamnagar
Jamnagar

CHAPTER III
REPUBLIC IS BORN

47

Government House
New Delhi
22 January 1950

Dear Sardar Sahib,

I am writing to inform you that you will take the oaths of office and secrecy as a Minister for the Union in the Upper Loggia on the conclusion of the swearing-in ceremony of the President on Thursday, 26 January 1950.

I enclose a copy of the memorandum of the ceremonial which will be observed and copies of the oaths.

Would you kindly let me know whether you will take an oath or make an affirmation?

Yours sincerely,
S. A. Lal
Secretary to the
Governor-General

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Minister for Home Affairs & States

48

1 Aurangzeb Road
New Delhi
24 January 1950

My dear Lal,

Thank you for your letter of 22 January 1950 and the documents enclosed with it. I shall make an affirmation.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Shavax A. Lal
Secretary to
H.E. the Governor-General
New Delhi

Government House
New Delhi
23 January 1950

My dear Mr. Shankar,

I shall be grateful if you would kindly inform the Hon'ble the Deputy Prime Minister that the ex-Governor-General, after going through the local engagements at Government House, which have been mentioned in the enclosed programme, will arrive at Palam at 9-30 a.m. on 27 January 1950 morning, and will emplane at 10 a.m.

He will be very pleased to meet the Hon'ble the Deputy Prime Minister at 8-45 a.m. at Government House, or at 9-30 at the aerodrome, whichever time is convenient to the Deputy Prime Minister.

I enclose a special car park label for use on that day.

Will you kindly let me know in advance at which point the ex-Governor-General will have the pleasure of meeting the Hon'ble the Deputy Prime Minister?

Yours sincerely,
B. Chatterjee
Colonel
[Military Secretary]

Shri V. Shankar, ICS.
Private Secretary to
The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Ministry of Home Affairs
New Delhi

Note : I have replied to Col. Chatterjee on the phone that H. M. will meet H. E. both at 8.45 a.m. and 9.30. The car park label should be given to the driver that day and the programme may be put up to Maniben.

V. P. (Menon)
24-1-50

PROGRAMME OF THE EX-GOVERNOR-GENERAL'S DEPARTURE ON
27 JANUARY 1950

- 8.45 a.m. Shri Chakravarti Rajagopalachari arrives at the Durbar Hall.
8.45 to Receives officials and non-officials present.
9.00 a.m.
9.00 a.m. Inspects a Guard of Honour. (National Anthem and Salute).
9.05 a.m. Receives farewell greetings (from the assembled gathering).
9.10 a.m. Boards a coach and $\frac{1}{2}$ and leaves in procession.
(Mounted Bodyguard of the President in front and behind).
9.15 a.m. Alights at the main gate from the coach, gets into the President's car, and drives to Palam.
9.30 a.m. Arrives at Palam airport.
9.30 a.m. Inspects a Guard of Honour and takes leave of the Heads of the
to Diplomatic Corps, the Hon'ble Ministers and officials and non-
10.00 a.m. officials present.
10.00 a.m. The ex-Governor-General takes off from Palam.

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New Delhi
29 January 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I enclose a copy of a letter which the President [Dr. Rajendra Prasad] has received from Rajaji and has sent on to me.

He has asked me to pass it on to you.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

From Plane
27 January 1950

My dear Rajen Babu,

My thought goes back 'naturally to you all whom I have left behind.

There is an almighty, vigilant and kindly Power that has evolved all this beautiful and great world out of the primordial substance. May that Power bless you and our dear country and the men and women entrusted to your

charge and that of your colleagues! May you find all the strength and the support you require!

I go with joy in my heart at the beautiful manner in which the little changeover has taken place. There was nothing to mar the beauty of it. God bless you all.

Yours affectionately,
C. Rajagopalachari

[PS.]

Please show this to Jawaharlal and Vallabhbhai. I am not writing separately to them.

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New Delhi
30 January 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

As you know, the Delhi Municipality is giving an address of welcome to the President next Sunday, 5 February. The President will go in procession for part of the way.

On 26 January there was a great deal of disappointment at the Presidential procession being a small one. Somehow the crowd expected, quite wrongly I think, to see some leading Congress figures in the procession. I have been asked very specially that on this occasion, that is on 5 February, an opportunity should be given to the crowds to see at least three persons—yourself, Maulana [Azad] and me. The President has suggested that I should accompany him in the same carriage, but I feel this will not be proper from many points of view. I think however that it is desirable for some of us to exhibit ourselves, in a way, to the crowd. The best course appears to me for us individually to go in our cars through the route of the procession, rather slowly, some little time before the President comes. We could precede him by about 10 minutes or 15 minutes. This should not be a procession by any means, but each separate car going that way. It is desirable of course that the car should be an open one.

I hope you will come to this function and will approve of the suggestion I have made above. If you have any difficulty in getting an open car, the Chief Commissioner has promised to provide one.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

Government House
New Delhi
31 January 1950

Dear Mr. Shankar,

On relinquishment of his office as Governor-General of India, Shri C. Rajagopalachari desired me to send the accompanying autographed photograph of himself to the Deputy Prime Minister as a memento of the very many happy moments he spent with him during his tenure of office.

Yours sincerely,
B. Chatterjee

Shri V. Shankar, ics
Private Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

New Delhi
1 February 1950

My dear Col. Chatterjee,

Thank you for your letter dated 31 January 1950 and the autographed photograph of Shri C. Rajagopalachari. H.M. much appreciates the kind thought which prompted Rajaji to send this memento. Needless to say, he will prize it as a very valuable gift from a life-long friend and colleague, whose brotherly affection will remain in abiding memory.

Yours sincerely,
V. Shankar

Col. B. Chatterjee
Military Secretary to
the President
Government House
New Delhi

Government House
New Delhi
1 February 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I am enclosing a copy of a letter I have addressed to Jawaharlalji for your consideration and advice.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

Government House
New Delhi
1 February 1950

My dear Jawaharlalji,

There are several institutions and associations with which I have been associated. In some cases the association is more or less nominal whereas in others it involves my actual participation in their work or in settling their policy. I shall be obliged for your advice as to what I should do. It is obvious that I cannot continue to be Chairman of the Development Board of Faridabad or of Rajpura. Similarly, it is obvious that I cannot continue to be a member of the Working Committee of the Congress. But it is not quite clear whether I should cease to be a member of the All-India Congress Committee and cut off my connection with the various other Trusts.

I am enclosing a list of the institutions with which I am connected as far as I can recall them at present.

Rajendra Prasad

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister
New Delhi



THE SARDAR WITH MORARJI DLSAI (RIGHT) AND KANAIYALAL DLSAI, MP, AND A VETERAN CONGRESS LEADER OF GUJARAT DURING HIS LAST VISIT TO AHMEDABAD IN OCTOBER 1950



WITH THAKKAR BAPA, A CLOSE ASSOCIATE OF MAHATMA GANDHI AND A DEDICATED WORKER FOR
THE WELFARE OF HARIJANS AND TRIBAL PEOPLE

INSTITUTIONS WITH WHICH DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD IS CONNECTED:

- 1 Indian National Congress
- 2 Gandhi Smarak Nidhi
- 3 Birla Education Trust
- 4 Syamsunder Trust (Champaran)
- 5 Faridabad Township Development Board
- 6 Rajpura Development Board
- 7 History Congress
- 8 Bharatiya Itihas Parishad
- 9 Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan
- 10 Bihar Vidyapith
- 11 Kashi Vidyapith
- 12 Hindustani Prachar Sabha
- 13 Go Seva Sangh, Wardha
- 14 Bihar Goshala Federation
- 15 Agricultural Economic Conference

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New Delhi
7 February 1950

My dear Rajen Babu,

Thank you for your letter of 1 February 1950 regarding the question of your connection with other Trusts and membership of the AICC. I shall discuss the matter with Jawaharlal and let you have my views.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Rajendra Prasad
President of the Indian Republic
New Delhi

New Delhi
10 February 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thank you for your letter of 7 February. I have since received from Jawaharlalji the letter of which I enclose a copy. In view of his advice I have written to the various institutions mentioned in my letter of 1 February and told them that I shall not be able to continue my association with them. But some of them say that their institutions being non-political, there is no reason why I should resign.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

ENCLOSURE

New Delhi
1 February 1950

My dear Rajendra Babu,

Thank you for your letter of 1 February sending me a list of the many institutions and associations with which you have been associated.

It seems to me that, as President, it will be difficult for you to continue your association with these organisations in the capacity of an office-bearer or a member of an executive committee. You may continue in regard to some of them such as the historical or educational institutions as a kind of patron. But I am not sure if even this would fit in.

You cannot function as an active member of the Indian National Congress or of the AICC. I suppose however that you are an ex-officio member of the AICC. If so, you can leave it at that, making it clear to the Congress President that you cannot function as an active member of the Congress.

I do not think you should continue the Presidentship of the Gandhi Memorial Fund.

As for Faridabad and Rajpura Boards, you should not continue your chairmanship.

I am inclined to think that the best course would be for you to inform all the organisations with which you have been associated that on your assumption of office as President it is not in the fitness of things for you to remain as a member of those organisations, though no doubt your interest would continue.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Dr. Rajendra Prasad
President
New Delhi

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New Delhi
14 February 1950

My dear Rajen Babu,

Thank you for your letter dated 10 February 1950 regarding the question of your continuing on the various institutions.

I feel that, in this matter, you should be guided by what the Prime Minister has advised you. I think that the view which he has taken is the only one consistent with the dignity, position and aloofness of the high office which you occupy.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Rajendra Prasad
New Delhi

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New Delhi
21 February 1950

My dear Rajen Babu,

You have received a copy of Jawaharlal's letter to me dated 20 February. I am sending herewith a copy of my reply to him.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Rajendra Prasad
President
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

New Delhi
21 February 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter of 15 February 1950 regarding inquiry in cases of firing.

2. The question is a difficult and complicated one and raises issues which affect the fundamental basis both of Government and the organisation to which we all have the honour to belong. The general public has been so long used to firings for suppression of political liberties and civil rights under an alien rule that it has only very slowly been adapting itself to similar action taken by representatives of the public. After all, we have the right to expect the public, so long as we represent it, to be believed and if we are satisfied that in any particular case action was justified and if we can adduce convincing arguments about it I see no reason why we cannot be trusted. In my judgment, if the general public is unable to trust us, we have no reason to be where we are. Where we feel that on account of the matter being in doubt or in view of the heavy loss of life and property, an inquiry, whether departmental or otherwise, is necessary, we should be free to take a decision in favour of a suitable form of inquiry. Any convention, such as you suggest, would, in my judgment, be a slur on our representative character as well as capacity to judge things for ourselves. Moreover, any weakening in this matter would merely slacken the pace of adaptation to which I have referred above. We have to realise one cardinal fact that we have still to educate our people into a sense of responsibility and civic duties. They have to cease to regard the police as instruments of oppression or tyranny. While I agree that the police have a great deal to contribute towards this process of realisation on the part of general public, I feel that there is a greater need for change in the attitude of the people at large.

3. What you have stated about Calcutta, Rewa, Ahmedabad, Salem and Bareilly, are instances in point. You yourself hold that the firing in Calcutta was justified. The sentiment in Calcutta was not against firing on women. If we succumb to this sentiment, are we to surrender our Government and administration to a pack of hysterical women mischievously led, who might have surrendered their capacity for thinking to an organisation subversive of everything peaceful and decent in life? However, in view of the agitation, which was sponsored by interested people and which did acquire considerable momentum, the police went slow on the question of firing. They

resorted to lathi-charges, even though they suffered several casualties by means of acid bombs and other missiles. When I went there the public was in favour of more firing.

4. As regards Rewa, again the figures of casualties tell their own tale. There were two or three persons killed and about half a dozen or dozen injured as against 38 policemen injured. Considering that the whole incident took place in a crowded locality where the police and the crowd were almost mixed up, the figures of casualties are by no means large. Those who have agitated against the police have for their own purposes shed some tears over the members of the public who have been killed or wounded, but there has not been a word of sympathy for the policemen who have suffered injuries. Are we to surrender the very instruments of our authority in such a threatening situation to the bewildering gaze of a public inquiry? You can imagine the reactions of a man who is facing a threatening mob with a gun; the occasion demands that he must disperse the mob by resort to firing but in his mind comes suddenly the feeling that if he did so he would have to face a public inquiry into his own action. The problem is not theoretical. Its practical consequences have arisen. In a similar situation in Bengal, the sub-inspector leading a police party and faced with an angry mob turned to his own men and implored them not to fire at the crowd lest he should have to face an inquiry into his conduct. You can visualise what respect for law the crowd must have had and what idea of discipline the policemen must have formed!

5. In Ahmedabad jail, the police resorted to firing and killed one or two persons and injured a few others. There was a judicial trial in which the judge held that the assembly was unlawful. In spite of it he gave the right of self-defence to the accused and blamed the police for firing. The contradiction is obvious, but it shows the danger of making inquiries the general rule. The Bombay Government have already filed an appeal to the High Court against acquittal on the charge of assaulting police officers and men.

6. I have already sent you Madhava Menon's account of what took place in Salem. That I think was a clear case for appointment of an inquiry committee and I am glad that one has already been appointed.

7. As regards Bareilly, from the accounts which we have received, it is clear that the police showed a remarkable degree of tolerance and forbearance and it was not the police who ran amuck but the students and the general public. Pantji [G. B. Pant] was virtually compelled to order an inquiry and suspend the police officers; he was surrounded by angry students who could not be otherwise pacified. I see no reason why students should have the privilege of treating with contempt the police doing their duty. Authority once flouted creates unending repercussions. We are still having repercussions of disobedience to law and authority which we fostered in defence of

our liberties. We cannot afford to foster any such disobedience while we are striving hard to preserve that hard-won liberty.

8. There is also another aspect to which I have referred above in passing. I am quite convinced that administration, least of all police administration, cannot function if there is a shadow of inquisition hanging over the heads of the personnel. Administrative machinery is as sensitive as public opinion. We cannot afford to give a jolt to either, but if a choice has to come between the two, all that I can say is that it is easier to steady public opinion after a jolt than to steady the administrative machinery after demoralisation has set in. The reason is obvious. Cramps in administrative machinery gradually paralyse the whole system; because it is something psychological, something collective and impersonal, it is difficult fully to encompass and the inevitable consequences of a jolt reverberate much more quickly and last much longer. Public opinion is in a sense easier to handle because public memories are shorter, its voice is seldom united and agitation as such is confined to a small section. After all, if you come to consider, at best there is nothing but sentiment behind whatever agitation has been set up against these firings. This sentiment has been exploited by interested parties, be they Communists or Socialists or dissident Congressmen themselves. To succumb to their pressure and to weaken the morale of the police where we feel that firing was justified would, in my judgment, be extremely unwise. During my recent visit to Calcutta, I dealt with this aspect fully in my addresses and the public speech. I put before the general public the necessity of a more balanced approach to this question and pointed out how, as a result of the tolerance and forbearance shown by the police, the latter had suffered whereas those whose avowed object it was to upset society by violent means, had escaped. I think this approach has now been generally appreciated by the people in Bengal and there is a greater appreciation of the worth and role of the police. I feel that the answer to such public criticism, as there exists, of the action of the police is this balanced approach rather than a general concession of inquiry into firings.

9. We have also to bear in mind that those with whom we have to deal are seasoned mischief-makers without any scruples or any compunction and guided by the sole object of creating disturbances irrespective of consequences either on the police or on the general public. The only effective counter to their tactics can be firm, resolute and just actions. I agree that action can deter only if it is just and cannot be just merely because it deters. But in my judgment, except where the gravity of the incident justifies an independent inquiry, the final judgment of the justice of an action must be that of the executive. Any other approach would be a confession of our failure as representatives of public opinion and repositories of public confidence. In a law and order situation such as we have to face today with resolute,

unprincipled and determined opponents matched against us, I am convinced that we cannot afford to weaken our hands nor our position.

10. At the same time, I do feel that State Governments should take the public more and more into confidence in such matters at as early a stage as possible and come out with such justification as there may be of the action taken. I propose, therefore, to write to the Home Ministers of State Governments pointing out the harmful consequences of any adverse public reactions in such cases as a result of any resolute action taken by the police and magistracy and suggesting that wherever any firing resulting in any appreciable loss of life takes place, they should have such high-level magisterial inquiry as may be possible almost immediately after the firing takes place. The Minister concerned and if necessary the Chief Minister and the Cabinet should go into the records and findings of the inquiry and then issue a public statement detailing the circumstances in which the firing took place and the justification for the action taken. Where the Ministers or the Cabinet feel that firing was not justified or justification was doubtful, they should have a judicial in camera inquiry unless in any particular case they feel a public judicial inquiry would be justified.

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister
New Delhi

59

Flag Officer Commanding
First Cruiser Squadron
C/o G.P.O.
London
18 February 1950

My dear Sardarji,

I am giving this letter to Edwina to take out with her as she is passing through Delhi on her trip to Hong Kong.

I have been watching the events in India with continued interest and was delighted to see that the events of 26 January went off so well both in India and throughout the world.

You must feel a very proud man for the great part you played not only in making India an independent Sovereign Republic but also for keeping this republic within the Commonwealth.

The Indian destroyer flotilla was here with the Mediterranean Fleet for 2½ months. On several occasions at sea they were under my immediate command and I was proud to know how well they were handled.

I went on board each of the ships several times and met most of the officers and men. Their enthusiasm and zeal was a real inspiration.

I remain distressed, as do all true friends of India, at the continuation of the Kashmir dispute. This problem can only be solved to the dissatisfaction of both sides, for if complete satisfaction were given to one side the other side would never accept the solution, but I am sure that the continuation of this dispute will harm both countries equally and possibly India even more than Pakistan, for India has so much more to lose. I pray you may long be spared in good health to help guide the destinies of India and am sure that Maniben is looking after you well. I send my most affectionate regard to you both.

Yours ever,
Dickie Mountbatten

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

60

New Delhi
16 March 1950

My dear Lord Mountbatten,

Thank you for your letter of 18 February 1950 which Lady Mountbatten gave me on her arrival in Delhi. I am sorry it was not possible for me to acknowledge it earlier due to extreme pressure on my time, partly on account of the Parliamentary session and partly on account of ugly developments in East Bengal about which you must have read already.

2. It was so nice to meet Lady Mountbatten again. These periodical visits keep the memories of our association fresh and we are enabled to exchange ideas. She must have given you an account of her visit here and also her impressions of how far we have travelled from the days when you were struggling hard along with us to secure independence for India and to keep India within the Commonwealth. We have achieved success in attaining our objectives, but the troubles are still around us. They are much more than a nation, while still trying to stand on its feet, need

or should have experienced. But there is an unseen power which presides over our destiny and makes us the instruments of its design and plan and their execution. We have managed to get a measure of our economic problems and there is some evidence of returning confidence in that sphere, but our relations with Pakistan show no signs of improving. Instead there is a tendency in the other direction. We have all done and are doing our best to check this adverse tendency, but unfortunately nothing that we do seems to impress Pakistan while a great deal of what we do not seems to attract their attention.

3. Regarding Kashmir, events seem to be indicating the wisdom of the line which you suggested in December 1947 but we had not accepted for reasons which you know. However, as you say, the problem can only be solved peacefully to a partial dissatisfaction of both sides. We, on our part, realise it but a recognition of this has to come from the other side.

4. I am very glad to know that you were so much impressed by our destroyer flotilla and that you took so much interest in them during their stay in Malta.

With affectionate regards from us both,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Rear Admiral Earl Mountbatten of Burma
Flag Officer Commanding
First Cruiser Squadron
C/o G.P.O. London

61

Flag Officer Commanding
First Cruiser Squadron
C/o G.P.O. London
16 April 1950

My dear Sardarji,

Thank you for your letter of 16 March. Edwina told me on her return how kind and hospitable you and Maniben had been to her during her visit to Delhi.

She also gave me a very full account of the terrible troublous times through which you are all passing. My mind reverted instantly to the somewhat similar times which we all passed through when I was still out there with you. I remembered the discussions

we used to have about Jawaharlal's active policy in the Cabinet and the somewhat more idealistic policy of Ahimsa which our dear beloved Gandhiji was preaching.

I well remember how troubled you were in your own mind between the pressure that was put on you by the more emotional and unstable elements to take violent physical action against Pakistan and the resistance to such a policy which Gandhiji and Jawaharlal put forward.

Although Gandhiji lost his life in keeping India on a sane and peaceful path, he enormously enhanced the prestige of India throughout the world.

It is only since I have come away from India and been able to see how the rest of the world regards India that I realise to the full how right he was, how right Jawaharlal was and finally how great and courageous it was of you to come over to their side and support them when so many of your friends were pressing you to take action which would have dimmed India's good name for generations to come, apart from retarding her development for years.

I was sad to learn from Edwina that the same situation was arising again and for the same reasons. She told me she felt certain that you were not going to allow yourself to be swayed by the emotional and unstable elements in the country or even in the Congress Party.

You have for years been the "strong man" of India. With your support Jawaharlal cannot fail. I do not believe there is one man in the country who would stand up to you when you make up your mind, so that the support which you are in a position to give him is a matter of the highest international importance.

But I know that this strong support cannot be given without considerable mental anguish and distress to yourself and so I thought it might help you if I wrote to you as a friend to tell you how much I hope you will continue with your courageous decision to support the policy of peace and sanity.

Any steps which would ultimately lead to war with Pakistan or to India giving up her magnificent policy to remain a secular State could only mean the undoing of everything that you and I and our friends worked for in India. We have all learned from the last wars through which we have been that no one emerges from a war as a victor; both sides are immeasurably the poorer for having fought.

That does not prevent human nature from being very silly and still feeling that the sword is the answer. Look at how stupidly we are behaving in the rest of the world. Look at the line-up on both sides making angry faces at each other and threatening to resort to a third world war. Surely the great point of having got your freedom in India is that you are there by your own free masters and can take the sane and courageous line and be a shining example to the rest of the world.

Please forgive my writing this long and rather maudlin letter to you but I have a great affection for you and a high regard for everything you have done. Above all I felt that perhaps the knowledge that your friends in the outside world were looking to you and relying on your staunch loyalty to Jawaharlal might be of help to you when dealing with the dissident and recalcitrant people who cannot be expected to take the same big view as yourself.

May you be long spared in health and strength to maintain the true and upright policy of India in the way that our dear friend Gandhiji would have wished it.

My very warmest wishes to a very dear friend,

Yours ever,
Dickie Mountbatten

62

New Delhi
26 March 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I enclose a copy of a letter I have received from the President regarding the general elections. I am sending copies also to the Law Minister and to the Election Commissioner.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

Government House
New Delhi
26 March 1950

My dear Jawaharlalji,

As the question of introducing legislation about elections is under consideration, I desire to make some suggestions for consideration.

The Constitution does not lay down that the elections in all the States should be held together and there should be nothing in the election law to require this. This question has to be looked at from two points of view.

In the first place, if any State, big or small, is unable, on account of its laziness or inefficiency, to get ready for the elections, elections in other places should not be held up. I would suggest that a deadline should be fixed for the newly elected Parliament to meet and all the States should be required and expected to complete their elections in time to enable their representatives to sit in Parliament on that date. If for any reason any State is unable to elect representatives before that date, the sitting of Parliament should not for that reason be postponed and it should start its work leaving the defaulting State free to send its representatives to join it later on. I had thought of proposing the inclusion of a provision to this effect in the Constitution itself when it was under consideration, but after a talk I had with the Deputy Prime Minister I dropped the idea as I understood that any such provision was unnecessary as all the States would be ready for election about the same time. I understand now that some of the smaller States are not likely to be so ready and therefore all the elections may have to be held up for that reason. I am therefore anxious that there should be no provision in the election law requiring Parliament to start functioning only after elections have been held in all the States.

There is another aspect of this which is also of very great importance. There should be nothing in the legislation to require simultaneous election spread over, say, a fortnight or a month in all the States. Each State should be left free to hold its elections as soon as it gets ready and its Legislature should begin to function as soon as the election is held. Only its representatives in Parliament will not sit until the date which is fixed for the first sitting of Parliament. If any State is vigilant and active, it should not be required to wait until the laziest of the States is in a position to hold elections. This will act as a spur to States to be active and bring into being their own

legislatures as early as possible. But apart from this, there is a very practical consideration which makes any provision for simultaneous elections almost incapable of implementation. We shall have in the country as a whole more than 160 or 170 million voters. The number of seats to which elections will have to be held will be something like 3,000 to 4,000 and each constituency will have, in the case of the Legislative Assembly, something like 60,000 or 70,000 voters, and in the case of the House of the People, nearly ten times that number. It is not difficult to calculate the number of polling booths with their polling officers and clerks that will be required to conduct the elections. There will also have to be policemen at each polling booth to maintain order, and generally in the country as a whole special precautions will have to be taken to maintain peace. With the many parties growing up and the passions that are bound to be roused at the time of elections, and with the experience of small district board elections in some parts of the country where in one constituency as many as six or eight people have been killed in a clash between parties, the tremendous nature of the problem of law and order can easily be imagined. Elections will therefore, as a practical measure, have to be spread over so that a State may take assistance from a neighbouring State in conducting them. I doubt if any State can produce the number of officers and clerks, etc. that will be necessary for conducting the elections, and most of the States will be under the necessity of taking assistance from sister States. If the Election law makes it necessary to have all the elections at about the same time, insuperable difficulty will have to be faced. So, both from the point of view of fairness to States which can get ready sooner than others, as well as from the point of view of practical expediency, simultaneous elections should not be contemplated and in fact should be avoided.

The third point is with regard to the method of voting. In the West they use mechanical devices which enable quick voting and counting to be done. A ballot box with a certain mechanical device was exhibited some time ago and it is worth while considering whether some such device should not be adopted here also.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister
New Delhi

Nanuoya
Ceylon
24 April 1950

The Hon'ble Mr. Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister of India
Delhi, India

Respected Sir,

We have pleasure in enclosing herein an invitation card issued in connection with the ceremony of laying the foundation stone for the memorial hall and reading room to be created at Nanuoya in memory of Mahatma Gandhi, on Sunday, 30 April 1950, at 11.0 a.m.

The contribution for this building fund is largely from the Indian employees in estates and also from all other nationalities; and the use of this building and reading room is open to all, free, irrespective of caste, creed or community.

May we ask for your blessing for the success of our activities, and for this memorial building to exist for a large number of years to serve the needs of mankind?

Yours faithfully,
S. Ramalingam
S. P. Thomas
Joint Secretaries

New Delhi
29 April 1950

Dear Friend,

Thank you for your letter of 24 April 1950.

2. I regret it will not be possible for me to attend the ceremony. I should like, however, to express my great pleasure that you have decided to perpetuate Gandhiji's memory in this manner. Gandhiji's message was of universal appeal and it is, therefore, befitting that his message should be carried all over the world. I

hope and pray that the memorial and the reading room will achieve this object.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri S. Ramalingam
Gandhi Seva Sangam
Nanuoya (Ceylon)

65

New Delhi
10 March 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

I am sending herewith a copy of my letter to Rajen Babu and of [G. V.] Mavalankar's¹ letter to me about Rajen Babu continuing as President or Trustee of the Gandhi National Memorial Fund.

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE I

New Delhi
10 March 1950

My dear Rajen Babu,

You remember that when we discussed the question of your continuing as President or Trustee of the Gandhi National Memorial Fund, Dada Saheb Mavalankar was asked to examine the position and let us know what he thought about it. I am sending herewith a copy of his letter to me explaining the position.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Rajendra Prasad
New Delhi

¹ General Secretary, 36th Indian National Congress, Ahmedabad, 1921; Speaker, Bombay Assembly; President, Central Assembly, 1946-50; first Speaker of Lok Sabha

ENCLOSURE II

RE: DR. RAJENDRA PRASAD CONTINUING AS TRUSTEE OF THE
GANDHI SMARAK NIDHI

20 Akbar Road
New Delhi
6 March 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

You remember, the other day (26 February) when the question was mooted as to whether Dr. Rajendra Prasad could or should continue to be the President of the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, I expressed the view that, while I was clear that he should not continue to be the President of the Fund I doubted as to whether he could not continue even as a Trustee of the Fund. The point of distinction which I had then in my mind was that while he would be holding an executive office as President of the Fund his duties as a mere Trustee were purely deliberative, and I, therefore, could not be clear why he should not continue to be even a Trustee.

Thereafter, I pondered over the matter, and had also the benefit of informal discussion with Shri Motilal Setalvad.¹ As a result of our discussion and examination, I now feel clear that it is desirable that he should not continue even as a Trustee so long as he holds the high office as the executive Head of the State.

I need not go into the reasoning in detail. The main ground of distinction between private and personal capacity and one's capacity as a Trustee will depend upon the nature of the Trust. In cases of public trusts, it is clear that the responsibility as a trustee is voluntarily undertaken and does not arise as a result of any obligations resulting from certain legal relationship. It is, therefore, but proper that what is voluntarily undertaken as a public duty should be given up while undertaking another public duty which may perhaps come in conflict with the first duty. That is one distinction. The other would be that as the Trust is undertaking a number of schemes it is very probable that he may be dragged into a court of law by some people at some time, and the Head of the State should not be given an opportunity to be made a party even as a pro forma trustee so long as he is the President.

¹ Lawyer; India's delegate at several international conferences, including UN General Assembly; former Attorney-General of India; Chairman, Law Commission, 1955; member, Rajya Sabha

The cases of private trusts will stand on an entirely different footing. There, though the liability may not necessarily be undertaken voluntarily, there is no question of public duty involved and, therefore, no likelihood of any conflict between two different types of public duty.

I am writing this because it was suggested during the course of discussion that I may look into the matter further. It is my conclusion, after very careful consideration, that the advice which you and Pandit Nehru were giving was proper and correct.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
G. V. Mavalankar

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

66

Camp Bombay
25 May 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

I have received a letter from [R.R.] Diwakar in which he has conveyed to me your instructions that Government should go ahead with the proposals of collecting films on Gandhiji and records of Bapu's voice and your view that Government should be prepared to undertake the cost of these. As you know, the [Gandhi National Memorial] Trust is interested in both these and if Government also starts collecting these, there would be duplication and it is quite possible that *in some cases there might be a sort of competition as the persons who have these films or records might try to obtain better terms from either Government or the Trust.* My own feeling is that these matters should be dealt with by one authority and there should be no duplication.

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister
New Delhi

New Delhi
27 May 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Your letter of 25 May about collection of films on Gandhiji. I would be very glad indeed if the Gandhi Memorial Fund could do this work. But I understood from Diwakar that they are not in a position to do so and had no facilities for the purpose. In fact they wanted Government to help them to do it, though perhaps they might provide the money. I am quite sure that the Trustees of the Fund will not be able to collect these films effectively. As for the cost of the films etc., if the Memorial Fund pays the money, well and good. The point is that the work is to be done speedily and effectively. I fear this will not happen if the Trustees tried to do it directly.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
1 Aurangzeb Road
New Delhi

CHAPTER IV
RELIGIOUS FANATICISM

68

10 February 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

H. V. R. Iengar¹ told me of the latest developments in Calcutta and suggested that I should issue some kind of an appeal to the people of Calcutta. I told him that we had requested you to issue a statement. On further thought I felt that it might help if I issued that appeal in addition to what you might say. The sooner this is done the better. So I am issuing a statement to the Press, a copy of which I enclose. I hope you will also issue a statement.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

ENCLOSURE

For some time past I have been greatly concerned with developments in East Bengal and their repercussions in West Bengal. I have followed these events with anxiety, in which all my colleagues in Government have fully shared. These developments in East Bengal have brought unhappiness and misery to large numbers of people, many of whom have been forced by circumstances to migrate towards West Bengal. Apart from this human misery involved, the situation is full of danger. The Government of West Bengal and the Government of India, fully conscious of this danger, have given earnest thought to this question and taken action to meet the situation. Inevitably we cannot control happenings in East Bengal, except by consultation with the Pakistan Central Government and the Government of East Bengal. On our side of the border we are of course fully responsible. We have taken steps therefore on our side and we have been in constant and urgent consultation with the Pakistan Government on these issues.

Certain repercussions that took place in Murshidabad district were speedily and effectively handled by the West Bengal Government. Meanwhile other

¹ ICS; Secretary, Ministry of Planning, Government of India, Principal Private Secretary to Nehru; Home Secretary under Sardar Patel; Governor, Reserve Bank of India

developments have taken place in certain parts of Calcutta which have added to the gravity of the situation. I would like to make an earnest appeal to the people of Calcutta to help in every way in controlling this situation and bringing it back to normal. Whatever action we take now or later cannot possibly be helped by disturbances in Calcutta or elsewhere. Above all, attempts at retaliation are not only essentially bad from every point of view but also are harmful and weaken the action we might take. I can well understand the strong feelings that have been aroused by accounts brought by refugees and others from East Bengal. We share those feelings. But action should not flow from feeling and emotion alone. In order to be effective and firm, it has to be calm and well-thought-out and must be based on right principles. Otherwise that action is not only ineffective but is injurious to the very cause for which we stand. In trying to solve one problem, we should not give rise to other and more difficult problems. On no account must we fall a prey to communal passion and retaliation. The problem of Calcutta and West Bengal is not a provincial problem only but an all-India one and the burden of solving it must rest with the whole of India. In this matter differences in political approach do not or should not count, for all political progress depends upon certain basic fundamentals of having an ordered society and tolerance for each other. An ordered society faces those who seek to injure it with firmness and effectiveness. If that basis goes, then anti-social elements have free play.

I would therefore appeal to the citizens of Calcutta and the people of West Bengal, including the refugees who have come over from East Bengal, to put an end speedily to the manifestations of disorder and to help in bringing normality to the life of that great city. We can then face these new problems, as we have faced the old, with all our combined strength, keeping in view the objectives and principles for which we have stood and by which alone we can make our country great.

Jawaharlal Nehru

New Delhi

10-2-1950

SARDAR PATEL'S APPEAL

The Prime Minister has separately issued a statement on the situation in East Bengal and its repercussions on our own side of the frontier. I fully endorse his appeal for calm and dispassionate thinking and for a sane and principled approach to the problem with which we are faced. It is easy to act on the spur of the moment of anger and emotion; it is much more difficult to retrace a false step once taken or to repair the damage once perpetrated.

There can be no doubt that Bengal with the rest of India has been roused by what our own brothers and sisters have suffered in East Bengal. It is, however, in our own interests as well as those of the sufferers of those

atrocities that the trouble should be localised and dealt with firmly and resolutely. The stakes involved are such and the dangerous possibilities of the situation so great that we cannot afford to relax either in vigilance or in caution; nor can we display anything but active sympathy in the plight and suffering of the grief-stricken refugees that are coming to us from across the border. Let us also concentrate on ensuring that these victims of religious fanaticism return to what is their own with a sense of security and in full enjoyment of their civic rights.

If that be our objective, it is obvious that nothing is to be gained but everything is to be lost by a resort to those very brute passions, the victims of which are in our midst. Peace and sober judgment must be maintained at all costs and in that task the citizens of immediately affected areas must extend a helping hand to their Government, both in Bengal and at the Centre. It is only thus that our hands can be strengthened in taking suitable action to deal with the difficult situation which confronts us.

Vallabhbhai Patel

69

My dear Jawaharlal,

I have gone through your statement [see enclosure] and have only the following comments to offer:

1. I would suggest your putting para 3 somewhat differently. As it is, it gives the impression that the trouble started with Calcutta. Perhaps this could be best done by adding the following sentence after the first:

"But it must be remembered that it was provoked by the reports of the happenings in Khulna to which I shall presently revert. Nevertheless . . .".

2. I would earnestly request you to revise the last portion of your statement. I have already expressed to you my misgivings and we have still to talk about what you have in mind. From your own point of view, however, any advance indication of your intention or loud thinking on this very vital matter would take away very substantially from the value and intensity of the dramatic or shock effect of the step you contemplate. On the other hand from the public point of view, it would make confusion worse confounded and create a sense of bewilderment and anxiety which might lead to a mass hysteria or arouse disturbing speculations at a time when calm, careful and deep thinking is required. The aim of the statement should, in my judgment, be to steady public opinion and direct it to deliberative and constructive channels

rather to leave it confounded and guessing. I do hope you will accept my advice.

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

ENCLOSURE

EXTRACTS

DRAFT STATEMENT TO BE MADE BY THE PRIME MINISTER IN PARLIAMENT ON 23 FEBRUARY 1950, REGARDING RECENT EVENTS IN EAST AND WEST BENGAL

Calcutta was the scene of trouble and we deplore greatly what happened there. I think it can be said with truth that this trouble was dealt with firmly and effectively and stopped with some rapidity. I should like to express our appreciation of the manner and the firmness and impartiality with which the Chief Minister of West Bengal dealt with the situation in Calcutta. Calcutta is a great city open to anyone who wishes to go there and see things for himself. Nothing can remain hidden there. But East Bengal is very different in this respect and news travels slowly. A kind of iron curtain fell on East Bengal during these days which prevented accurate information to come through except in dribbles.

We have to face many serious problems in our country. Among these is that of Kashmir and the House knows how much importance I attach to it, because behind it lie vital questions of principle and moral behaviour among nations. This Kashmir matter is being discussed elsewhere. To me it appears that what has happened in Kashmir and what is happening in East Bengal are all interlinked and we cannot separate them. We want peace in this country and with Pakistan, and I have repeatedly made that offer. But peace and goodwill are not going to come by some superficial arrangement, when these deep seated causes of trouble and conflict continue. Today the Bengal problem has first priority, because it governs so many other problems. For my part I would like to devote myself chiefly to these particular issues of Bengal and Kashmir which, as I have said, are linked together in my mind. It may be that I can serve these causes better by some other method than is open to me at present or in some other capacity than I occupy. I am deeply troubled by recent events and my mind is constantly trying to find out how best I can discharge my duty and my obligation to my people.

New Delhi
25 February 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

I have just now seen a copy of your telegram [see enclosure] to Liaquat regarding East Bengal in which you have suggested that both the Governments should issue a public statement expressing their determination, inter alia, to restore looted property etc. I think we should also cover the question of restoration of abducted women to their families and restoration of forced converts to their original faith. I would suggest that you supplement this telegram by another containing this suggestion.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE
TELEGRAM

24 February 1950

From Foreign New Delhi
To Foreign Karachi

FROM JAWAHARLAL NEHRU FOR LIAQUAT ALI KHAN. NEWS CONTINUES TO REACH US OF GRAVE SITUATION IN EAST BENGAL AND OF PERSISTENT EFFORTS TO DRIVE OUT HINDUS. ON THE OTHER HAND PAKISTAN RADIO AND NEWSPAPERS STATE THAT TEN THOUSAND MUSLIMS WERE KILLED IN WEST BENGAL AND PROPERTY WORTH ONE CRORE LOOTED. THIS IS AMAZING FALSEHOOD. I HAVE GIVEN EXACT FIGURES OF PERSONS KILLED IN CALCUTTA AND OTHER PARTS [of] WEST BENGAL IN MY STATEMENT ON 23 FEBRUARY BEFORE PARLIAMENT. YOUR HIGH COMMISSIONER HAS BEEN IN CALCUTTA AND IT IS EASY TO MAKE ENQUIRIES THERE. WE HAVE ASKED YOU TO SEND YOUR MINISTERS THERE TO COOPERATE WITH US IN INVESTIGATION. I MUST PROTEST VERY STRONGLY AGAINST THIS UTTERLY FALSE PROPAGANDA BY OFFICIAL RADIO, WHICH MUST INCITE PEOPLE IN PAKISTAN AND LEAD TO WORSENING OF VERY GRAVE SITUATION. IT IS DIFFICULT FOR US TO GIVE ANY FIGURES OR EXACT INFORMATION ABOUT EAST BENGAL. BUT WE ARE IN A POSITION TO

KNOW EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED IN WEST BENGAL. YOUR GOVERNMENT HAS NOT PUBLISHED ANY FIGURES OF CASUALTIES OR DAMAGE IN EAST BENGAL. INSTEAD OF THIS, PASTASTIC INFORMATION IS GIVEN ABOUT EVENTS IN WEST BENGAL. I INVITE YOU AGAIN TO HAVE JOINT ENQUIRY IN BOTH WEST AND EAST BENGAL.

2. YOU HAVE EXPRESSED YOUR WISH THAT MIGRATIONS FROM ONE PART OF BENGAL TO ANOTHER SHOULD BE STERNLY DISCOURAGED. I ENTIRELY AGREE WITH YOU. BUT MERE EXPRESSION OF WISH BY EITHER OF US IS NOT ENOUGH, UNLESS WE SUPPLEMENT IT BY POSITIVE ACTION WHICH PRODUCES CONFIDENCE AND SECURITY IN MINDS OF MINORITIES. I SUGGEST THAT BOTH OUR GOVERNMENTS SHOULD ANNOUNCE PUBLICLY THAT: (1) THEY WILL PUNISH THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN GUILTY OF DISTURBANCES, KILLING, ARSON, LOOTING, ETC. (2) THAT THEY WILL GIVE COMPENSATION TO THOSE WHO HAVE SUFFERED FROM THESE DISTURBANCES AND HELP IN REHABILITATING IN THEIR FORMER PLACES PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN RENDERED HOMELESS OR WHO HAVE MIGRATED. (3) THERE SHOULD BE INTENSE SEARCH FOR LOOTED PROPERTY AND THOSE IN POSSESSION OF IT SHOULD BE ASKED TO RETURN IT IMMEDIATELY OR ELSE THEY WILL BE PRESUMED TO HAVE PARTICIPATED IN LOOTING OR RECEIVING STOLEN PROPERTY. (4) PEOPLE SPREADING WILD RUMOURS AND PREACHING COMMUNAL HATRED SHOULD BE ARRESTED. NEWSPAPERS DOING THIS SHOULD BE PROCEEDED AGAINST. (5) GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED WILL APPOINT COMMITTEES OF ENQUIRY TO ENQUIRE INTO DISTURBANCES AND PUNISH THOSE GUILTY.

3. THESE ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION. IF THIS IS DONE, WE MAY BE ABLE TO STOP FURTHER DETERIORATION AND HELP IN PRODUCING SOME SENSE OF SECURITY IN MINORITIES WITHOUT WHICH THERE CAN BE NO NORMALITY AND EXODUS WILL CONTINUE.

4. I WOULD REQUEST YOU TO CONTRADICT STATEMENTS MADE BY PAKISTAN RADIO AND PRESS ABOUT CASUALTIES IN WEST BENGAL.

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New Delhi
25 February 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

I have carefully read the draft letter which you propose to send to Liaquat Ali Khan in reply to his regarding the 'No War' declaration. My own reading of Liaquat's letter is that he is cleverly trying to commit us to a line of procedure both in regard to outstanding and future disputes which would give Pakistan, in view of its complete disregard of scruples, principles or moral behaviour, a perpetual advantage over us. While everything binds us, nothing seems to bind them. A perpetual war of nerves, a series of accomplished facts, continuous pressure backed by persistent

vilifying campaign and absolute denial of even the most glaring facts which take place in its territory are all quite familiar to us. We have had sufficient experience of the implementation of agreements with Pakistan. We have also had a bitter taste of the protection which it affords to minorities. If anybody had any little faith in the good intentions of Pakistan, East Bengal should shatter it completely. To me, the whole matter seems to be so unrealistic in the present circumstances that I wonder if we cannot put an end to this talk, at least for the time being. We seem to be offering a counsel of peace where the spirit and mentality of war exist, and where, to the best of our information, all preparations for war are being made.

2. Your own proposal in Pakistan was a fairly simple one. It was to the effect that, whatever happens, whatever differences may exist between us, we would never resolve them by resort to war. Pakistan's stand completely negatives this approach. There is a clear implication (which, in my judgment, we should fully exploit) that so far as Pakistan is concerned, it is prepared to go to war in the event of differences not being resolved to its satisfaction. In short, while you wish absolutely to outlaw war between India and Pakistan, Liaquat's attitude is fundamentally different. He says, "First you provide a machinery for settling disputes and then I shall see, in the light of that machinery, whether I can agree to outlaw war." I feel that the fundamental difference in the approach to this problem between you two can be fully exploited to the disadvantage of Pakistan, should Pakistan ever try to accuse us of not meaning business.

3. My feeling is that if we cannot get an agreement on the simple proposition of outlawry of war we should not get ourselves involved in the discussion of details. Otherwise, our position would become untenable and we would be accused of having mental reservations. We shall thus be providing Pakistan with targets of attack and, in the present prejudiced atmosphere of the world outside, I am afraid we shall again be put internationally in the wrong.

4. As regards specific issues raised by Pakistan, as you have pointed out, the question of Kashmir is before the Security Council. Having invoked a forum of settlement of disputes open to both India and Pakistan, as members of the United Nations Organisation, nothing further need be done in the way of settlement of disputes than to leave matters to be adjusted through that forum. The same applies to Junagadh on which, as you have rightly said,

our position is well known to Pakistan and we cannot modify it. Then come the questions of canal waters, evacuee property and Pakistan assets. Here, the position is fundamentally different from other international disputes. These questions do not arise between two nations or countries. They arise as a result of the partition of an undivided India. There are agreements attaching to these matters. The question is of implementing those agreements, and what action should be taken to secure the implementation of the agreements must be decided by both the Governments on the merits and progress of negotiations of each case. There can be no question of linking these matters with the fundamental question of outlawing war between the two countries. As illustrations of my point of view, I shall deal with the first two questions with which I am more familiar.

5. As regards canal waters, the question really is one of sovereignty rights. I wonder if there is any known case of questions relating to sovereignty rights apart from territorial disputes being referred to arbitration. We have here specific agreements, expressly or impliedly accepting our sovereignty rights over the canal waters. The Pakistan Government is not only going back on those agreements but is also giving the whole dispute a wider significance and making the whole controversy more comprehensive. The only result of going to arbitration in such circumstances would be that we would lose what we have got under the agreements, and the whole question which was settled as a result of a joint agreement of partition will be opened afresh with results which are unpredictable. Any weakness in this matter is likely to have very wide repercussions on our whole irrigation system. The Bhakra scheme will be in jeopardy. Pakistan will try to have a finger in the distribution of the waters of the Jumna, Ganges and Brahmapurta, which, vis-a-vis Pakistan, acquire the character of international rivers. If at all a choice has to be made, I would rather have arbitration than the International Court of Justice. In regard to the former, at least we shall have our own man on the Bench who might influence the arbitrator by his learning and grasp of matters, as was the case recently in regard to the Bagge Tribunal; once we submit the case to the International Court of Justice, we just become helpless.

6. As regards evacuee property, the main dispute is whether it should be on a Government-to-Government basis or only on the basis of a private exchange. Here I feel that our position is fundamentally strong, because, even if we allow private exchange, there

is no doubt that the gap which will be left in the field is so wide that we must have some means of settling accounts with Pakistan. There is no question of sovereignty rights involved, and I would personally not object to the matter being put to arbitration.

7. As regards Pakistan assets, here again the question is one of implementation of partition agreements. We had an Arbitral Tribunal to settle some of the disputes arising out of partition. If negotiations on mediation fail, we could have an arbitral tribunal again.

8. To sum up, therefore, my view strongly is that we should not get involved into a discussion of individual items of dispute or of the machinery to be provided for settling those disputes. We should confine ourselves to the simple proposition which we have put forward, but over which there is a fundamental difference of approach between ourselves and Pakistan. If you feel that it is not possible to confine ourselves to this simple issue, then the best course would be to get out of the whole business by pointing out this fundamental difference in approach and indicating to Pakistan that this approach is suggestive of their having mental reservation on this simple issue. That being the case, and with the East Bengal situation facing us and the attendant campaign of vilification (of which their radio news of 10,000 persons killed in Calcutta is a glaring example), it is not an opportune time to pursue this matter at least for the time being, until relations between the two countries assume a character in which it would be possible for Pakistan to subscribe to the simple issue of outlawry of war without any mental reservations and it would be possible for us to put faith in such intentions. Any other approach at this time would not only land us in entanglements, from which we would find it difficult to extricate ourselves except by prejudicing whatever advantages we have gained, but also likely to be misunderstood and severely criticised by public opinion in India. I sometimes wonder, having regard to the present situation, whether we could really talk of peace with Pakistan when it is quite clear that it is thinking and preparing in terms of war and is doing everything possible to cast on us a burden which would break our back.

I am returning the copy of the draft letter sent by you.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

COPY OF A LETTER DATED 24 FEBRUARY 1950 FROM PANDIT NEHRU
TO MR. LIAQUAT ALI KHAN

In continuation of my letter dated 17 February, I am now writing to you to convey our considered reply to your letter of 14 February. I regret the slight delay in sending this fuller reply. Apart from the important engagements to which I referred in my letter of 17 February, we have had to deal with the events which have occurred recently in East and West Bengal. These events, as you know, have dominated the situation and intimately govern future relations between India and Pakistan. I am communicating with you separately in regard to the Bengal situation.

I am glad to note that Pakistan desires most sincerely to remove all causes of friction with her neighbour, India, and to promote friendly relations, without which it is impossible for either country to achieve the full measure of its potential development. May I say that we fully reciprocate these sentiments? I am also happy that Pakistan welcomes the proposal to issue a joint declaration, the primary object of which must be to carry conviction to the people of India and Pakistan and of the whole world as to the sincerity of both Governments in renouncing war as a method of settling their disputes. "To attain this object," you say, "it is essential that there should be tangible action to match the spirit of the declaration since peoples and Governments are judged by their actions rather than by their words." I may assure you that, in suggesting that we should make the declaration first and, immediately afterwards, consider ways and means of settling outstanding disputes between our two countries, it was not my intention that action should not be prompt and in conformity with the spirit of the declaration. Our view was, and is, that, considering the acuteness of the tension that now unfortunately exists, the psychological effect of the declaration itself would be to reassure our respective peoples that, whatever the differences between the two Governments, they would be settled peacefully and that both countries would be spared the horrors of a fratricidal war. However, I realise that a matter of this high importance could not and ought not to be considered exclusively from the standpoint of either India or Pakistan. With the full

consciousness of the importance to both our countries of an agreed declaration and in a spirit of sincere friendship we have considered again our original proposal and I shall now indicate what we regard as an arrangement that should be acceptable to both of us.

I do not in the least minimise either the significance or the gravity of the dispute regarding the future of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. This issue, however, is already before the Security Council, and has only recently been fully debated. We feel that the Security Council, which is one of the principal organs of the United Nations, and has adequate authority under the Charter to deal with it, should continue to handle it. Our stand with regard to Junagadh is well known to you; I regret that we are unable to modify it.

As regards the other disputes enumerated in the aide memorial, namely, canal water, evacuee property and Pakistan assets claimed by your Government from India, we agree that a settlement of these disputes shall be sought through negotiation and mediation and, if these should fail to bring a settlement, by resort to arbitration. Of course when arbitration is resorted to we shall abide by the award of any arbitral tribunal that may be set up in agreement between the two Governments.

According to my understanding, you propose that there should be one arbitral tribunal to deal with all disputes, presumably with the exception of the dispute over canal waters which you think should be referred to the International Court of Justice. We anticipate practical difficulty in one tribunal dealing with all disputes, especially when one considers the importance that you and we both attach to an early settlement of some of them. Apart from the question of time, that of the competence of the personnel has also to be taken into account. For example, the qualifications required of members of the tribunal that may be appointed to deal with the dispute over canal waters may not be the same as those required for one of the other disputes, e.g., the one relating to evacuee property. Indeed, your view that, as regards the dispute over canal waters, the International Court of Justice should be the arbitral authority itself supports the point of view that I have just expressed. I am also not in favour of inviting the Governments of three friendly countries to nominate one member each to these tribunals. In my opinion, it would be very much better to adhere to the practice adopted by both our Governments so far, namely, that each should select one arbitrator and the

third should be chosen by the two Governments in agreement. Of course, when a dispute is referred to arbitration, each party must agree in advance to abide by the award of the arbitrators; or if they are not unanimous, by the decision of the majority.

I shall now deal with the suggestion for a time table. I readily agree that, ordinarily, from the date of the declaration, two months should be allowed for negotiations. But circumstances beyond the control of one or both Governments may make completion of negotiations within this period impossible, I therefore, suggest that the two Governments may by agreement extend this period provided that the maximum period does not exceed six months. As regards the subsequent processes, namely, mediation and arbitration, I am doubtful whether it would be prudent to fix time limits in advance. About arbitration, you yourself have said that its duration would depend on the arbitrator or arbitrators. The same holds true of mediation. While speed is important, flexibility is no less so, and neither should be sacrificed to the other. Some general provision on the lines that, in the event of the mediator or mediators—in the latter case, by a majority—coming to the conclusion that the possibilities of mediation have been exhausted, the matter must be referred to arbitration, should be sufficient.

On the basis of what I have said in the preceding parts of this letter, I suggest the following re-draft of the declaration as proposed by you in paragraph 11 of your letter:

“The Government of India and the Government of Pakistan, being desirous of promoting friendship and goodwill between their peoples, hereby declare that they will not resort to war for the settlement of any existing or future disputes between them. They further agree that the settlement of such disputes shall always be sought through the peaceful methods of negotiation and mediation, and, if these should fail to bring settlement, by resort to arbitration. Differences relating to the procedure for arbitration, if not settled by agreement, shall also be referred to arbitration. They undertake that, for the settlement of all existing disputes, other than those, e.g., Kashmir, which are now before the Security Council of the United Nations, they will abide by the award of an arbitral tribunal, or a recognised international agency such as the International Court of Justice. An arbitral tribunal for the settlement of a dispute shall consist of one nominee of each Government and a third chosen by the two nominees

in agreement, or, failing such agreement, by the two Governments. In the event of the members of a tribunal not being unanimous, the decision of the majority shall be binding. Negotiations for the settlement of all such disputes shall begin as early as practicable. Normally the negotiations shall be completed within two months. But circumstances beyond the control of one or both Governments may make completion of negotiations within this period impossible. In such a contingency the maximum period for negotiations shall be six months. Such disputes as are not settled by negotiation shall be referred to mediation. If the mediator or mediators come to the conclusion—in the latter case by a majority—that the possibilities of mediation have been exhausted, the dispute or the unsettled points therein shall be referred to arbitration.

In pursuance of this declaration, both Governments agree that the canal water dispute shall, if no agreement is reached by negotiation or mediation, be referred for decision to the International Court of Justice or to any other tribunal that may be agreed upon. In other disputes outstanding between them such as evacuee property, boundary disputes and claims relating to assets, both Governments agree that if no settlement is reached by negotiation or mediation the matter shall be referred to an arbitral tribunal. It is their earnest hope as well as their firm conviction that implementation of this declaration and the spirit which lies behind it will serve to promote friendly relations between the two countries and advance the cause of international peace."

This matter has been under discussion between us for over two months now and I sincerely hope that we shall be able to reach an agreed conclusion without further delay.

As I have said at the beginning of this letter, the most important and urgent problem for us to consider at present is the situation that has arisen in the two Bengals. Such a situation can only be dealt with satisfactorily by negotiation on the basis of ascertained facts. It was because of this that I have suggested to you in my other communications that we should make every effort to ascertain facts and then to lay down the policy to be pursued.

TELEGRAM

From Foreign New Delhi
To Foreign Karachi

FROM JAWAHARLAL NEHRU FOR MR. LIAQUAT ALI KHAN. BEGINS. YOUR TELEGRAM DATED APRIL 16 IN ANSWER TO MY TELEGRAM NO. 21056. I AGREE WITH YOU THAT IN NO EVENT SHOULD FORCE BE USED TO SETTLE ANY BORDER DISPUTE. PRESENT STATUS QUO SHOULD BE MAINTAINED AND MATTER SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY RESPECTIVE DISTRICT MAGISTRATES. I AM IMMEDIATELY COMMUNICATING THIS TO WEST BENGAL GOVERNMENT AND I HOPE THAT STRICT ORDERS TO THIS EFFECT WILL BE ISSUED ON THESE LINES BY ALL AUTHORITIES CONCERNED.

2. REGARDING PARAGRAPH 2 OF YOUR TELEGRAM I AM REFERRING THIS TO WEST BENGAL GOVERNMENT.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Copy to The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

EXTRACTS FROM SARDAR PATEL'S STATEMENT AT A PRESS
CONFERENCE ON THE NEHRU-LIAQUAT AGREEMENT

16 April 1950

Friends,

... After a great deal of deliberations and adjustments of various views Government decided to enter into an agreement. The agreement is now a solemn word pledged on behalf of the people of India and of Bengal. It is, therefore, our bounden duty to fulfil our obligation and make every honest effort to implement it. We have to do it in a manner which would enable us to say before God and man that we have done our duty. I know that many doubt the usefulness or the worth of this agreement.

... It is unnecessary for me to say how many anxious days and nights we have passed over the ills of Bengal. Day and night Bengal has been with us, never for a moment did we relax in our attempts to help Bengal to the best of our capacity. We realise that if Bengal dies India dies and that India cannot live without Bengal. It was with this consciousness and fully realising our duty to Bengal that we entered into this agreement and I would like you to understand its implications in that spirit.

... You will naturally ask me whether in the light of the broken pledges of the past we had any justification for entering into another agreement. I can tell you quite frankly that we ourselves had those doubts. It was not easy for me to reconcile myself to a faith in the pledged word of Pakistan. You know how the Prime Minister of Pakistan only a few days before he came to India spoke about me in connection with the Bengal disturbances. I was naturally very sore about it. When he called me, however, I met him. I had a very long talk with him. So did the Prime Minister. We came to the conclusion that there was a different spirit behind the words of the Pakistan Prime Minister and that if we had to avert a major calamity which would completely upset the two countries, we must explore this possibility of averting a great disaster. We thought "let us take this last chance."

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New Delhi
16 April 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I met Ismail, the Pakistan High Commissioner in India, this evening at a party. He told me that he was anxious that the Central Minister on behalf of Pakistan, to be appointed under the Agreement, should be a good man, who is not an extremist. He had spoken to Liaquat Ali Khan about it and warned him not to appoint a man like Sbhabuddin. Liaquat Ali had agreed. Ismail had recommended a man named Dr. Hussain Malik who is now a Deputy Minister in Pakistan. Dr. Malik is a Calcutta man and I am told his family is still there. Ismail said that he appeared to him to be a good man. I am passing this information on to you for what it is worth. Of course Ismail could not say who would be appointed.

I have been rather dissatisfied with the messages received from Santosh Babu, our Deputy [High] Commissioner in Dacca. These messages do not indicate a grip on the situation or an attempt to deal with it. He does not seem to be himself in touch with the East Bengal Government. His secretary sometimes meets some secretary. That is not good enough. It is his business to exert himself and be in personal touch with the Government there and try to settle things as quickly as possible. I see no attempt at this being done and his office seems to function just as a complaint-receiving agency, which complaints he passes on to us. He must deal with these matters himself with the East Bengal Government at the top level. He should understand the

purpose and spirit of the Agreement and see that this is carried through and not merely go on telling us of what is not done. In fact what he has been doing there has been the work of any junior official, who could equally well communicate to us various complaints. A diplomat does something much more and he should appreciate this.

I am writing this because I imagine he might be coming to Calcutta to see you and it would be a good thing if you pointed this out to him. Dutt could have a talk with him also on this subject.

I enclose a telegram received from Liaquat Ali Khan. Please refer this matter to the West Bengal Government. I also enclose copy of my reply. I think that immediate instructions should be issued in regard to border incidents, as suggested. Further that some kind of an answer will have to be sent to Liaquat Ali Khan about the Cooch-Behar incident.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Camp Government House
Calcutta

ENCLOSURE
TELEGRAM

16 April 1950

From Foreign Karachi
To Foreign New Delhi

PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU FROM LIAQUAT ALI KHAN. YOUR TELEGRAM DATED 13 APRIL. I ENTIRELY AGREE WITH YOU THAT PETTY BORDER CONFLICTS AND SKIRMISHES MUST BE STOPPED. THE BEST WAY OF DOING THIS WOULD BE TO ISSUE STRICT INSTRUCTIONS TO ALL OFFICERS ON EAST BENGAL WEST BENGAL ASSAM AND TRIPURA BORDER THAT STATUS QUO MUST BE RESPECTED AND FORCE MUST NOT BE USED TO SETTLE ANY BORDER DISPUTE. IN THE EVENT OF DISPUTE ARISING PARTIES MUST IMMEDIATELY REFER MATTER TO THEIR OWN DISTRICT MAGISTRATE CONCERNED WHO SHOULD CONTACT HIS OPPOSITE NUMBER ACROSS THE BORDER AND ARRANGE A JOINT ENQUIRY WITH MINIMUM DELAY TO SETTLE DISPUTE. WHILE DISPUTE IS UNSETTLED THE AREA IN DISPUTE WILL REMAIN UNDER AUTHORITY OF WHATEVER PARTY IS AT PRESENT IN CONTROL. I TAKE IT THAT THIS IS INTENTION BEHIND YOUR SUGGESTION THAT DISPUTED AREAS SHOULD BE "TREATED AS NO MAN'S LAND AND

WHATEVER IS STATUS QUO AT PRESENT SHOULD BE MAINTAINED." IF YOU AGREE WE MAY ISSUE DIRECTIONS ON ABOVE LINES TO AUTHORITIES CONCERNED. I SHOULD LIKE TO ADD THAT IN ACCORDANCE WITH AN EXISTING AGREEMENT BETWEEN CHIEF SECRETARIES OF EAST BENGAL WEST BENGAL AND ASSAM DISTRICT MAGISTRATES ON BOTH SIDES OF BORDER HAVE ALREADY BEEN AUTHORISED IN THE CASE OF ALL BORDER DISPUTES TO CONTACT EACH OTHER DIRECT AND TO TAKE ACTION PROMPTLY WITHOUT WAITING FOR AUTHORISATION BY THEIR RESPECTIVE GOVERNMENTS.

2. SOME DIFFICULTIES HAVE ARISEN RECENTLY BECAUSE I UNDERSTAND DISTRICT MAGISTRATES OF WEST BENGAL ASSAM AND CHIEF COMMISSIONER TRIPURA HAVE LATTERLY SHOWN A MARKED RELUCTANCE TO ACT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS AGREEMENT. AS MENTIONED IN MY TELEGRAM OF YESTERDAY THE JAYNAGAR INCIDENT IS A CASE IN POINT. A POSSIBLY WORSE CASE IS THAT OF TRESPASS BY ARMED VOLUNTEERS ON MARCH 28TH INTO TWO EAST BENGAL ENCLAVES IN COOCH BEHAR ONE NAMED MUSTAFI UNDER PATGRAM POLICE STATION AND THE OTHER NAMED MOSHALDANGA UNDER BHUJILGAMARI POLICE STATION RANGPUR DISTRICT. MUSLIMS IN THESE ENCLAVES WERE ATTACKED WITH DEADLY WEAPONS AND DRIVEN WHOLESALE INTO EAST BENGAL AND CONGRESS FLAGS HOISTED ON THEIR HOUSES. FULL DETAILS OF DAMAGE AND CASUALTIES ARE STILL NOT AVAILABLE BECAUSE NOT ONLY HAVE COOCH BEHAR NOT YET AGREED TO A JOINT ENQUIRY BUT HAVE EVEN REFUSED DISTRICT MAGISTRATE RANGPUR PERMISSION TO PASS THROUGH COOCH BEHAR TERRITORY IN ORDER TO VISIT THESE ENCLAVES. I HAD REFRAINED FROM TROUBLING YOU ABOUT THIS MATTER EARLIER BECAUSE EAST BENGAL GOVERNMENT WERE HOPING TO SETTLE IT LOCALLY BUT SINCE THEIR EFFORTS HAVE FAILED, MAY I SEEK YOUR INTERVENTION?

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TELEGRAM DATED 26 MARCH 1950 FROM DR. B. C. ROY, CHIEF MINISTER, WEST BENGAL, TO THE PRIME MINISTER

HAVE BEEN SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING THE QUESTION OF DISPERSAL TO AREAS IN BIHAR AND ORISSA. I TOLD YOU WHEN YOU WERE IN CALCUTTA THAT MAYURBHANJ COULD BE A SUITABLE PLACE IN ORISSA. MAY I SUGGEST THAT SANTHAL PARGANAS AND PURNEA AREAS WHICH ARE CONTIGUOUS TO BENGAL WOULD ALSO BE VERY SUITABLE FOR THE PURPOSE BECAUSE THE AREA BEING CLOSER TO BENGAL COULD BE MORE SUITABLY CONTACTED? URGE UPON YOU THE NECESSITY OF PUTTING REFUGEE AREAS UNDER CENTRAL CONTROL. SAKSENA AGREES.

BIDHAN ROY

Camp Calcutta
18 April 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

I have been here now for practically two full days. I had a very busy time yesterday and the day before. I thought of writing to you but later I felt that I would wait until I had been able to gather some more impressions of how things are getting along here.

2. I met at a Press conference about 50 editors of various papers in Calcutta. The atmosphere was hostile to start with. They were all bitter and expressed complete absence of faith in the pledged word of Pakistan. I made an earnest appeal to them to view the agreement dispassionately, not on the basis of their past experience, but with a new and friendly approach to the whole scheme. I appealed for a fair trial to the agreement. A copy of what I said is attached to this letter. Towards the end the atmosphere was much improved; except one or two editors the rest were helpful and co-operative. Later I met six of the prominent editors at an informal tea. I could talk to them more intimately and converted one or two of them who had been rather sceptical throughout the Press conference. The result has been on the whole good. The Jugantar and the Amrit Bazar Patrika which had been very hostile, have now changed; although they are not enthusiastic, they are not ill-disposed either. Some venom they will put forth here and there but I do not think they will adopt an attitude which would misguide public opinion. The Advance, leaving aside the Nation from which it is useless to expect any help, is still critical but much less so than previously. I am positive that had Syama Prasad [Mookerjee] and [K. C.] Neogy not resigned or had they withdrawn their resignations, the position here would have been much better. However, I am still trying to spread goodwill and understanding. If necessary, I will prolong my stay here by a day in order to complete my work.

3. I have had long talks with Dr. Katju, Dr. Bidhan [Roy], Ministers and high officials of Government. I have also had long and intimate discussions with Surendra Mohan Ghosh and Profulla Babu. I am convinced that the Government is doing its best but is handicapped by the absence of backing from leaders

of public opinion, including the Congress. Politics has again entered into the game. People have an eye on the next election where refugees would have votes. They do not hesitate to adopt a policy which would break the back of Bengal. Even though Bihar and Orissa have promised to take 50,000 and 20,000 refugees, the total numbers that have gone are 8,000 and 9,000 respectively. There is a somewhat effective propaganda going about to the effect that Bengalis must be rehabilitated in Bengal and should not go elsewhere because that would break their political and cultural entity. I have not been to any relief camps as in my present state of health it is obviously impossible for me to go to each and every centre. You know Bengal! If I leave out any or many they will start making a grievance of it. I have, however, heard accounts about the organisation of relief. There are complaints about insanitation. On the other hand, there are also complaints that people themselves are so insanitary and have got such peculiar habits that they will not make use of the means of sanitation provided. Despite the refusal of the authorities to give them free rations, refugees do not leave the border camps, with the result that there is congestion. I am meeting the officials engaged in relief work tomorrow and will advise Bidhan as to how best this problem can be tackled.

4. I have had discussions with the Ministers and officials about the manner in which the agreement is to be implemented. I am sending herewith a brief report of the proceedings of the conference I held with the Ministry. More or less the same subjects were discussed with the higher officials in detail. I think that at least among the officials there is now a very clear understanding of the agreement and the action required to implement it. I expect that they will extend every help and co-operation to the Government. Amongst them there is no longer that sullenness or bitterness about which we heard in Delhi.

5. I feel that our Congressmen are not doing what they should. I am meeting Congress workers this afternoon and will try to impress upon them the duty which they owe to their province as well as to the country in this difficult hour. I have had talks with Bidhan about the selection of a Central Minister and of Gopalaswami's visit to Calcutta. As regards the former subject, C. C. Biswas¹ is generally considered the best man. Dr. Radha Binod Pal's² name has been suggested. I am not enthusiastic about

¹ Vice-Chancellor, Calcutta University, 1949; elected member, Rajya Sabha 1952 and made Minister for Law and Company Affairs

² A judge of Calcutta High Court who was made a member of the War Crimes Tribunal for Japan and recorded a dissenting judgment absolving war criminals.

it; somehow with the background of the INA his judgment in the Tojo trial appears to have gained for him a great deal of popularity. I am meeting both of them today. As regards Gopalswami's visit, Bidhan must have telephoned to you last night. I do not think his visit to Calcutta will serve any useful purpose.

6. Dutt will be going back day after tomorrow. He has been most useful. I shall be having talks with Sri Prakasa and the Chief Secretary of Assam tomorrow. I am told the latter has a great prejudice against Bengalis. I hope to put him right. Bardoloi and Medhi are coming on the 20th. The Chief Commissioner of Tripura is coming tomorrow as also the Administrator, Cooch-Bihar.

7. The main problem is the stopping of the exodus and persuading the refugees to return to their homes. The exodus has definitely diminished in volume. At present it seems to be confined to those who were already awaiting transport. I am told that these transit camps are not being filled by fresh migrants. If so, it is a healthy sign. At the same time, I do feel that de-requisitioning of the houses of Hindus in East Bengal will be a great help in creating a feeling of confidence among the refugees. I hope you will press this upon Liaquat Ali. There is a great antipathy in Bengal on that score and it is difficult to meet the argument that if the Pakistan Government wanted the refugees back they would not have requisitioned all their houses and property.

8. The Governor and Bidhan both advise against a public meeting as they feel that that would not serve any useful purpose in the present context. Instead, they consider that it would be better for me to address some leading men amongst the refugees. I might do that on the 20th. I was thinking of broadcasting from the Calcutta station on the 19th but now that Syama Prasad would be making his statement in the Assembly on the 19th afternoon I have put it off till the 20th so that I might try to undo any harm that his statement might do.

9. I shall write to you again on the 20th so that you might have an account of the situation before you leave for Dhanbad on the 21st morning. I shall be able to give you details only when you return to Delhi.

With love,

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister
New Delhi

New Delhi
18 April 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have received your letter of 18 April this evening. From all accounts your visit, as I expected, is producing excellent results. I am writing to you rather briefly now, as I wish to catch the night mail.

About the Central Minister, I would suggest that Radha Binod Pal would not be desirable. I have nothing against him, but as you say, his judgment in the Japanese trial, though good in many ways, was rather unbalanced. He is a man of ability, but who goes his own way. Another important factor is that he has been specially friendly with Mitter¹ of the Minorities Board. This may mean nothing, but it will be an irritating factor to the other side, because Mitter is like a red rag to them.

About C. C. Biswas I have no knowledge. Rajendra Babu said that he was his contemporary at college and he has a fairly good opinion of him. I am told that he was a nominated Member in the Central Assembly in the old days of the Swaraj Party and that the Swaraj Party did not particularly fancy him. I do not know how far this is true and in any event it need make no difference. He has recently been connected with university enquiries.

I saw Rajendra Babu this evening. Neogy was there also by chance. Rajendra Babu was trying to induce Neogy not to resign. He said that he would make a last effort to prevent Syama Prasad from resigning. I told him to go ahead with it certainly and I would be happy if neither of them resigned. I am afraid that things have gone too far for Syama Babu to withdraw his resignation.

Tomorrow morning I am answering a short notice question about what has been done to implement the Agreement. I shall give more or less a factual statement which will indicate that a good deal of implementation has taken place and that

¹ Member, Viceroy's Executive Council; Federal Advocate-General; Dewan of Baroda; acting Governor of West Bengal

conditions have improved. Presumably, immediately after this, Syama Prasad will make his statement.

I shall in any event miss you when you return, as I shall have gone off to Bihar with the President. I agree with you that it would be worthwhile your extending your stay by a day or two in Calcutta if you think this necessary.

I have decided finally to go to Karachi for two days, the 26th and 27th.

I wonder if some use is being made of military officers in dealing with the refugees. I am told that arrangements at stations and transit camps etc., are still difficult. I imagine that a few military officers would be very helpful in these arrangements at these places. They might even be put in charge of camps, where necessary, under the senior commandant, Nikhil Sen. But in any event at stations and such like places, they would be helpful. I spoke to Cariappa¹ about this and he said that he would issue instructions to General Roy [Bucher] to offer his help where needed in this respect. Please mention this to Bidhan Roy.

I am very sorry to learn of the continuing differences among Congressmen and the lack of co-operation that they are showing. I just do not know what one can do about it, if even you do not succeed at this moment of crisis.

I have a letter from Rajaji. He says that since you are away and I shall be away, there is no point in his coming here before I return from Karachi. I am suggesting to him to come here about the 26th or 27th, when you certainly will be here.

There is little doubt in my mind that there is a growing appreciation in the country about the value of the agreement. Even those who were very critical are toning down their criticism now. I asked some senior army officers and they told me that the feeling in the army was definitely in favour of the agreement.

I agree with you about the derequisitioning of houses in East Bengal. I have written to Liaquat Ali about it and I shall personally speak to him on this subject.

Rajaji has again reminded me of his proposal that our President and the G.G. of Pakistan should undertake a joint tour of East and West Bengal. Rajendra Babu is agreeable. You

¹ General K. M. Cariappa: GOC-in-C, Western Command, 1947; first Indian Commander-in-Chief of Indian Army, 1949-55

might mention this to Bidhan Roy and see how he feels about it.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Camp Government House
Calcutta

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TELEGRAM

Puri
24 April 1950

The Hon'ble Sardar Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

MY SINCEREST CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR CALCUTTA BROADCAST. IT IS SURE TO HAVE SALUTARY EFFECT ALL ROUND. THERE IS SO VERY MUCH TO BE DONE TO RESTORE BRIGHT HOPE TO COUNTRY BEFORE WE ARE CALLED UPON TO LEAVE THIS EARTH AND IT IS GIVEN YOU AND JAWAHAR TO WORK THIS MIRACLE. LIFE WITHOUT THIS HOPE BECOMES AN INTOLERABLE BURDEN. MAY NEW CHAPTER OPENED A FORTNIGHT AGO LEAD ON TO PEACE HARMONY AND UNINTERRUPTED PROGRESS.

ASAF ALI¹

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New Delhi
25 April 1950

My dear Asaf,

Thank your for your telegram of 24 April 1950.
2. It was so nice of you to send this touching message which I deeply appreciate.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Shri Asaf Ali
Governor of Orissa
Puri (Orissa)

¹ Prominent Congressman of Delhi; Deputy Leader Congress party in Central Legislature, 1945; Minister of Railways in Interim Government; first Indian Ambassador to US; Governor of Orissa

5 Queen Victoria Road
New Delhi
5 April 1950

My dear Sardarji,

I enclose copy of a letter which I am sending to the Prime Minister in connection with the point that was raised at the meeting of the Cabinet this evening.

2. The suggestion I have made therein is for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,
N. Gopalaswami [Ayyangar]

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

ENCLOSURE

5 Queen Victoria Road
New Delhi
5 April 1950

My dear Jawaharlalji,

The objection taken by Sardar Patel and [N. V.] Gadgil¹ to Part G of the draft agreement has point. The policy underlying the Constitution and the spirit behind it do contemplate that the administration of the country should be so ordered as to eliminate the idea of the giving or perpetuation of special concessions to minorities and the necessity, in consequence, of devising special machinery for the protection of their supposed special rights and interests. In the present context of things in India, this is no doubt merely an ideal. All the facts around us howl against it. All the same, it seems to me that, without detracting from the substance of Part G as it has been drafted, we should so re-draft it as to make it appear that we are not committing a breach of the ideal. I think this could be accomplished and would therefore suggest that Part G be redrafted as follows:

"G. Each of the two Governments will create a special department at the Centre to look after the enforcement of the fundamental democratic rights assured to all its nationals without distinction in Part A. The department will be in charge of a Minister who will, in

¹ MLA (Central), 1934; Party whip in Central Legislative Assembly till made Minister in Nehru Cabinet in August 1947; Governor of Punjab

consultation with the State Governments (in India) and with the Provincial Governments (in Pakistan), devise such special machinery and procedure as may be necessary for the effective discharge of his functions including the implementation of Part D."

2. I am sending copies of this letter to Sardar Patel and Bajpai.

Yours sincerely,

N. G.

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

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New Delhi

6 April 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Gopalaswami has sent me a copy of his letter to you regarding part G of the draft agreement. I am sending herewith a copy of my reply to him.

Yours sincerely,

Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

New Delhi

6 April 1950

My dear Gopalaswami,

Many thanks for your letter of 5 April 1950.

I am afraid you have not fully appreciated both the importance and the strength of sentiment and logic behind the stand taken over Part G of the draft agreement, if you feel that the fundamental objections raised could be met by a drafting change. Nobody will agree that what we have incorporated in the Constitution is merely an ideal. On the other hand, it incorporates all the bitter lessons we have learnt from separatism during the last 44 years and for which we have had to pay the costly price of partition. It was after tremendous efforts with almost complete unanimity among the representatives of the minorities that we have managed to cast off that incubus, but it appears we have yet to learn a more costly lesson before we can realise what a danger to our nationalism and, shall I say, even secularism we have averted. I am afraid your comment "all the facts around us howl against it" is unfair to the vast majority of the people of India who are as intent on the protection of life and property of the minorities as the representatives of the minorities themselves. Surely, you cannot build up such a proposition on the

unsettling effect which events outside our borders produce on [a] comparatively small section of the people and which provokes acts of violence.

It must, therefore, be made quite clear at this stage that there can be no submission on this issue. Even the Muslims here never asked for such a provision when the question was so closely and elaborately discussed in the Constituent Assembly. To put this poison into our Governmental machinery at the behest of an outside authority or to mollify it, particularly when it has cleverly liquidated minorities over a major part of its area, is to my mind completely indefensible. I am quite sure that the party will not accept it and the country will not swallow this bitter pill. We have conceded one Pakistan; that is more than enough. We cannot promote any further such mentality, let alone do anything which will perpetuate it. I must, therefore, express my complete opposition to the stand you have taken up and to the formula you have suggested.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar
Minister for Transport & Railways
New Delhi

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New Delhi
6 April 1950

My dear Sardarji,

I hasten to acknowledge with thanks your letter of date regarding Part G of the draft agreement.

I appreciate the sensitiveness with which you have reacted to one or two things I said in my letter to the Prime Minister yesterday. I know that you, more than anybody else, were the architect of the solution regarding the problems connected with minorities which along with others I helped to get embodied in the Constitution. The country cannot be too grateful to you for it.

In my letter to the Prime Minister I was contrasting what we have incorporated in our Constitution with what is happening around us. In relation to the latter, I am afraid that my view that the policy underlying the Constitution and the spirit behind it can only be described as an ideal can hardly be considered to be incorrect. There is nothing unfair to anybody in the comment to which you have taken exception. If the protection of the life and property of the minorities is as great a concern of the majority—and presumably, therefore, of the Government in power—it is difficult to appreciate the objection to creating

a department at the Centre for ensuring the implementation of this concern—in effect the implementation of the provisions of the Constitution.

In negotiations of the kind that are proceeding now, this objection seems to me to be hardly one that we should press to the breaking point especially in view of what has been accepted in Parts A and D of the draft.

I am by no means enamoured of the inclusion of Part G in the draft. I understood from what the Prime Minister told us yesterday evening that this Part had been agreed to and that he himself had been responsible not only for proposing it in the form in which it now appears, but for strongly pressing the acceptance of it. I thought that, if that was so and if it was therefore not possible to get it eliminated altogether, the wording of the Part might be revised in the terms I suggested. Those terms, though they repeat a good deal of the present Part G, could hardly be described as a mere drafting change. It omits all reference to minorities. It refers only to the creation of a department at the Centre for implementing what is already accepted in Parts A and D. Part A speaks of fundamental democratic rights and their effective enforcement by the Government. It is applicable to the whole of India. Part D speaks of the two Governments recognising that the whole of Part C with the exception of sub-clause (6) "are of general scope and shall be applied in any part of India when occasion arises." The wording I suggested for Part G refers only to the ensuring of the enforcement of the fundamental democratic rights assured to all Indian nationals without distinction in Part A and the implementation of Part D. My draft does no violence to the provisions of the Constitution; nor could it be interpreted as amounting to an injection of any poison of separatism into our governmental machinery.

I do not wish to say anything more. My purpose in sending this reply to your letter is to acquaint you with how my mind was working when I wrote the letter to the Prime Minister.

In his talk with Liaquat this afternoon, the Prime Minister will be pressing for the deletion of Part G altogether, and I do hope he will succeed in securing agreement on this without having to make any further concessions in respect of the other parts of the draft.

Yours sincerely,
N. Gopalaswami

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

CHAPTER V
CRISIS DEEPENS

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New Delhi
17 February 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I am sending you a copy of a letter I have addressed to the Finance Minister. I hope you agree with what I have written.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

New Delhi
17 February 1950

My dear Matthal,

For some days past I have been rather worried about the growing crisis [in] our relations with Pakistan. None of us wants war. But we cannot ignore the possibility of an explosion. I do not myself think, in spite of recent developments, that there is going to be war. But none of us in responsible positions can take risks in such a matter.

I think that the next six or seven months are rather critical. More particularly, I think that the three months, March to June, are critical. The crisis is likely to lessen with the coming of the monsoon and round about autumn it will be much less. If this is so, then we have to be completely prepared, in so far as we can, during these coming months, especially before the monsoon.

This brings me to the question of reduction in our army as contemplated by us and indeed as decided by us in the Defence Committee. I still hold to the opinion that some reduction is desirable from the point of view of sheer efficiency. But how far that should go is a matter to be carefully considered.

There is another aspect, however, which is very important. I have little doubt that any marked reduction would be strongly resented by Parliament and by the general public in the existing state of affairs. Also that the reaction in the army itself will be none too good. Even though the reduction may be small, it may create an impression in the army of insecurity, that is, various battalions may think that the axe of reduction may fall on them some time or other. This will involve a fear of unemployment, as it is difficult enough to find employment now. The result might well be a widespread feeling of dissatisfaction in the army which will come in the way not only of normal discipline but also of effectiveness.

All these are serious considerations at a moment like this. I feel that we cannot ignore them. What then are we to do? I understand that some preliminary orders for the proposed reduction have already been issued by Army Headquarters. These refer first to the defence battalions (temporary) and at a later stage to some regular battalions. These defence battalions have been raised in various provinces, but mostly they are stationed in East Punjab and West Bengal. Any mention of disbandment of the defence battalions in Bengal at this stage would undoubtedly be stoutly opposed and resented by the Bengal Government. So also probably in Punjab.

In view of all this I am clearly of opinion that this process of disbandment should be postponed for the present. It should certainly not apply to any regular battalions. In regard to the temporary defence battalions in Punjab and Bengal, it should also not apply for the present. Whether it should apply to some temporary defence battalions in the rest of India does not make much difference.

I have just had a talk with Baldev Singh on this subject and I pointed out these considerations to him. Naturally he agreed. This involves a suspension or a postponement for some months of the decision of the Defence Committee. I think we have to face that.

I do not know to what extent this affects your budget. I would suggest to you that in your budget speech you do not make any specific statement which might commit us or which might raise some kind of an uproar in Parliament. You might repeat rather vaguely that we hope, subject to the paramount importance of maintaining our Defence forces at a high level of efficiency for security purposes, to investigate all avenues of a reduction of defence expenditure.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

The Hon'ble Dr. John Matthai
Finance Minister
New Delhi

New Delhi
19 February 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter of 17 February 1950 regarding the strength of the Defence Forces. I agree that at present it would be virtually impossible to start any process of disbandment of the Armed Forces. At the same time, I have no doubt that there is room for economy in various other directions and if only the officers and the ranks of the Army will co-operate with us and work with a view to effecting economy, it would be possible for them to show a substantial reduction in defence expenditure. I would also like the Defence Ministry to explore every avenue of retrenchment in surplus staff, particularly non-combatant.

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister
New Delhi

New Delhi
25 February 1950

My dear Cariappa,

I understand that you are leaving out on tour tomorrow. You are fully aware of the critical situation in East Bengal. It has undoubted repercussions on the military situation and, as the Commander-in-Chief of the Army, I think it is only proper that you should be available for consultation whenever it might be necessary. Ordinary prudence requires us to be watchful and vigilant, as though an emergency might be in the offing. I myself propose to have informal discussions as soon as the Defence Minister returns. I would, therefore, ask you to cancel your tour and, for the time being, to stick to Headquarters. I would

suggest the same for at least your other superior staff at Headquarters which might be contemplating tours outside Delhi.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

General K. M. Cariappa
Commander-in-Chief, Army
New Delhi

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New Delhi
6 April 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I received a letter from Syama Prasad Mookerjee today in which he tendered his resignation. I enclose a copy of this letter. I also enclose a copy of my reply. In view of all the circumstances, I feel I could send no other reply.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE I

New Delhi
6 April 1950

My dear Panditji,

I hereby tender my resignation of my office as Minister. I hope you will kindly relieve me as early as possible.

The reason for my resignation, as I have communicated to you, arises out of the policy pursued regarding Indo-Pakistan relationship, specially relating to Bengal. The agreement which, I suppose, will be finalised today does not touch the basic problem and is not likely to offer any solution. I can under no circumstances be a party to it. Apart from the fact that it will bring little solace to the sufferers, it has certain features which are bound to give rise to fresh communal and political problems in India, the consequences of which we cannot foresee today. In my humble opinion the policy you are following will fail. Time alone can prove this.

It has been a privilege to work in the first Cabinet of Free India for two and a half years and may I thank you for the opportunity you gave me to do so?

Yours sincerely,
Syama Prasad Mookerjee

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

ENCLOSURE II

New Delhi
6 April 1950

My dear Syama Prasad,

I received your letter of today's date, tendering your resignation of your office as Minister, this morning.

It is natural for me to regret the termination of a companionship in work, which has lasted for more than two and a half years. These two and a half years have been full of difficult problems and crises. We have faced them with such strength and ability as we possess and I suppose it will be for the future to judge how far we did our work well or badly.

I think you are right in saying that there is a marked difference of opinion between you and me in regard to the policy to be pursued in connection with the present situation in Bengal as well as in regard to some other matters also. In view of this difference of opinion, I can understand your desiring me to relieve you of your office. As you know, in any event, the President has to form a new Council of Ministers fairly soon and I had hoped that no change need be necessary before the formation of a new Cabinet. If, however, you wish me to relieve you even earlier, I can only regret it, but I shall have to abide by your wishes. I shall have to consult the President about this matter and shall write to you again. It is unfortunate that you should resign just when these talks with the Prime Minister of Pakistan are taking place. But if you feel strongly about it, there is no help for it. Still, it would be better for any action to be delayed a little.

You refer to the policy we are pursuing in regard to Bengal. All of us have given the most anxious thought to this matter and you know how I feel about it. Whether our policy is correct in every detail or not, the future will show. But I am quite convinced of what should not be done and of the general direction that our policy should take. I can only function as Prime Minister, so long as that general direction is maintained.

In spite of differences of opinion, we have had the privilege of co-operating during a critical and fateful period of India's history. I am grateful

to you for your uniform courtesy and friendliness during these trying times.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

The Hon'ble Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee
Minister for Industry & Supply

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New Delhi
6 April 1950

My dear Sardarji,

I enclose copy of my letter of resignation to the Prime Minister.

May I express to you my deep gratitude for the confidence and affection I have all along received at your hands? Whatever I may do in future, your life and idealism will be a source of inspiration to me.

May you remain hale and active for some years at least so that our hard-won freedom may not become jeopardised.

Yours,
Syama Prasad

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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New Delhi
6 April 1950

My dear Syama Babu,

I am deeply touched by your affectionate letter of today.

The way things have taken a turn has distressed me so much that I feel very unhappy. You have spared no pains to serve your country during these trying and troublesome periods. Since the formation of our Cabinet it has been a pleasure to work with you. In whatever capacity you will be working in case your resignation is unfortunately accepted, I have no doubt that you will see that no action of yours will do any harm to the country and more especially to our dear afflicted province of Bengal. I have had no talk with H.P.M. on the subject yet and I do not know

how his mind is working. This is just the time when one would have wished that you should not go. I am so afraid of the reactions it may cause in the country. In any case I must not conceal from you the fact I shall miss you so much in case your resignation is accepted.

I shall hope that we shall be able to solve this Bengal tangle before it is too late.

With kind regards,

Yours affectionately,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee

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Government House
New Delhi
14 April 1950

My dear Vallabhbhaiji,

I enclose copy of a letter I have sent to Jawaharlalji, with its enclosures.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

14 April 1950

My dear Jawaharlalji,

I have had talks with Dr. Syama Prasad and Sjt. Neogy. I have found it difficult to dislodge them from the position which they have taken. They are worried very much by reports of incidents taking place even after the agreement has been published. Neogy has sent me copy of a telegram dated 12 April which he received yesterday and I find this is confirmed by the telephonic message received yesterday at 2.40 p.m. from the CIO, Calcutta, a copy of which I have just received.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister
New Delhi

COMMUNIQUE

The President has, under Clause (2) of Article 75 of the Constitution of India, accepted with regret the resignations of the Hon'ble Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee and the Hon'ble Shri Kshitish Chandra Neogy of their office as Ministers. The resignations take effect from 19 April 1950.

The Prime Minister will hold charge of the two Ministries for the present.

Government House

New Delhi

19 April 1950

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Prime Minister's Secretariat

New Delhi

19 April 1950

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I enclose herewith, for your information, an order by the Prime Minister in regard to the arrangements to be made for the work of the Ministries of Industry and Supply and Commerce on the resignations of Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee and Shri K. C. Neogy.

Your sincerely,

Dharma Vira¹

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

ENCLOSURE

PRIME MINISTER'S SECRETARIAT

In view of the President having accepted the resignations of Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee and Shri K. C. Neogy from the office of Minister, the two ministries, namely the Industry and Supply Ministry and the Commerce Ministry, which have thus far been under their charge, will henceforth, and till further arrangements are made, be under the charge of the Prime Minister.

19 April 1950

Jawaharlal Nehru

¹ ICS; Principal Private Secretary to Jawaharlal Nehru, 1950-51; Ambassador to Czechoslovakia, 1954-58; Secretary, Union Ministry of Rehabilitation, 1956-62; Chief Commissioner of Delhi, 1963-64; Cabinet Secretary, 1964-66; successively Governor of Punjab and Haryana, West Bengal and Mysore

Government House
New Delhi
7 June 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I received your letter yesterday and its enclosures being the copies of correspondence relating to the controversy raised by Dr. Matthai's statement. I had also received from Mr. Dharma Vira a copy of the telegram sent by the Prime Minister, which was communicated to you and of which you have also sent a copy along with the other papers.

I am enclosing herewith a copy of a note of an interview which the Calcutta correspondent of the Hindu had with Mr. [J.N.] Mandal.¹ Shiva Rao² has sent to me this copy with a request that it should not be published or used in any other way. If the Prime Minister were here I would have sent him also a copy.

I have had a talk with Satyanarayan. I am afraid the Congress session will have to be held in September, as the delegates will be put to much inconvenience on account of rains if it is held in August. If this is decided, then there will be plenty of time, after the return of the Prime Minister, for you to hold consultations about the Presidentship.

Yours sincerely,
Rajendra Prasad

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister

¹ A prominent Harijan of Bengal, nominated a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council in the Interim Government as a Hindu member of the Muslim League group

² Journalist; member, CA, 1946-50; Lok Sabha, 1952-57; Rajya Sabha, 1957-60

ENCLOSURE

NOTE ON THE CONFIDENTIAL CONVERSATION AT Dacca ON 25 MAY
1950 BETWEEN MR. J. N. MANDAL AND MR. T. V. VENKATRAMAN,
THE HINDU, CALCUTTA CORRESPONDENT

Mr. Mandal said: "The Hindus in East Bengal to a man are emphatic that they have no place in Pakistan and are determined to leave. I have advised them to wait for a few weeks more and that I too am prepared to accompany them to India. So long I have been claiming to be a representative only of the Scheduled Castes, but after what I have seen and heard, I feel I can speak for the entire Hindu community here.

"I have informed Delhi that it is only a question of time before the last Hindu reaches India from East Bengal. You must be prepared to receive us and rehabilitate us, and if necessary throw out enough Muslims to make room for us. If India is not prepared to do this, we shall appeal to the world, become Buddhists, Christians, but we will not submit to a slow process of Islamisation.

"My idea is that there should be no East Pakistan. There is a feeling in Pakistan that the Delhi Pact provides a breathing time for Pakistan; or to put it bluntly, to make Pakistan a permanent and lasting fact. Every Muslim feels that there should be no Hindus left inside Pakistan. India should not be foolish enough to believe that after driving out the Hindus, Pakistan will live in peace with India. West Pakistan is sufficiently armed and protected. They are now buying arms and ammunition openly in the world markets and it will not be long before East Bengal is also well armed. Orders have been issued to strengthen the defences of East Bengal. If in February there had been an armed intervention in East Bengal from India, it would have been all over with East Bengal, like Hyderabad, in the course of fifteen days. When East and West Pakistan are well armed, surely the Muslims are not going to rest content. They will launch a two-pronged attack on India. I caution India to be on the alert and not to be complacent and think that Pakistan will adhere to the Delhi Pact or any pact.

"One of the leading citizens of East Pakistan, whose counsel prevails with Liaquat Ali Khan (Mr. Anwar, Chief Adviser to the West Punjab Governor) once boasted that it will not be long before Pakistan expanded her territory. But the Kashmir affair and the way India not only halted the onslaught by the raiders, but was beginning to reclaim lost territory, made Pakistan sit up and take stock of her situation. You people agreed to a truce. Now the Pakistan leaders (they have lost all interest in Kashmir as far as I

can tell—they know, once they violate the truce, they are finished) are being told that the Kashmir affair should be kept burning to keep aloft the morale of the Muslims of Pakistan. The same thing happened in East Pakistan. When Liaquat Ali after his tour of East Bengal found that India was bent upon coming to the rescue of the Hindus, your Prime Minister concluded a pact with him. Believe me, there is no remedy. There should not be an east wing of Pakistan.

"I have undertaken a long tour of East Bengal and shall remain here for a long time helping the Hindus to get away from here. I have asked my followers (I represent about 25 lakhs of Scheduled Castes, mostly Namasudras) not only to resist aggression by Muslims, but to avenge thoroughly any injury done to a Hindu. If Delhi will realise our plight, we will to a man be led by Pandit Nehru and act according to his instructions. They want to drive away the Hindus from here and enjoy their property without allowing a single Muslim to enter East Bengal from India. They know that if East Pakistan is lost, Pakistan loses 12 annas in the rupee. And they know that so long as Hindus continue in East Bengal they cannot get all that 12 annas for themselves.

"After the Delhi Pact Muslims are being told that it is just like the Chamberlain-Munich Pact affair (comparing India to Hitler), that it is only a question of time before Hitler is crushed. I am awaiting the lead that Delhi will give the East Bengal Hindus. I am prepared to go to Delhi and plead personally with Pandit Nehru the cause of the East Bengal Hindus. My Cabinet colleagues have realised that my presence here is embarrassing to them. I have been asked to return to Karachi under various pretexts. They even asked me to lead the Pakistan delegation to the ILO to get me away from East Bengal.

"The Ansars are the greatest culprits in the recent trouble. They should be disbanded without any delay and their arms taken back. They were recruited from amongst the hooligan elements amongst the Muslims and with little or no means of livelihood. So it is no wonder they perpetrated all sorts of crimes upon Hindus.

"There is no propaganda by Muslims to uphold the Delhi Pact or any attempt to persuade the Hindus not to leave. The higher authorities are well meaning, but there is a limit. If they find that one particular senior officer is taking too much interest in the Delhi Pact, they promptly transfer him. Take the Superintendent of Police of Barisal who is an honest Muslim. The District Magistrate is a great rogue and he has been largely responsible for the greatest amount of mischief. When he and the S.P. clashed, the S.P. was promptly transferred. The lower officials are bent upon frustrating the pact and any amount of orders and instructions from the top will not make them budge. They have to pander to the Muslim mentality."

Mr. Mandal narrated a large number of instances where officialdom and Muslims alike were making life hell for the Hindus. Open threats are

being issued to Hindus to marry their womenfolk to Muslims. Money is being extorted in the guise of giving protection to them from hooligans. If Hindus dare report to the authorities, punishment often descends upon them. Houses and crops are destroyed and women molested. Koranic prayers are to be said in every school and every Hindu is to attend standing. Indian history is being tampered with. Maharaja Nandcoomar is being mentioned as Kaffir Nandcoomar. Hindu names of schools are being changed to Muslim names. Without contributing a pie to the funds of the schools, Muslims are being given 50 per cent or more representation in the administrative bodies. In district and union board elections under joint electorates, Hindus are being terrorised not to vote so as to get as many Muslims elected as possible. The situation in Barisal and Khulna continues to be most unsatisfactory and the two districts were the worst affected during the riots.

About the large number of Hindus who are daily returning to East Bengal, he said that the majority of these returning evacuees were from the Scheduled Castes, mainly Namasudras. These were returning with the object of settling down because they have large landed properties here and wanted to look after their agricultural interests. The Caste Hindus who were returning were doing so with the object of disposing of their property and migrating permanently to India. The fact that most of the caste Hindus have left has considerably weakened the morale of the lower Hindus. Ultimately he expects that with no more Caste Hindus left, the wrath of the Muslims will surely descend upon the lower class Hindus.

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Dehra Dun
8 June 1950

My dear Rajen Babu,

Thank you for your letter of 7 June 1950.

Shri Shiva Rao had also sent me a copy of the note on the interview of his correspondent with Shri Mandal. I had also received it through our Intelligence Bureau. It is a revealing document.

As regards the Congress session, I have already written to Hiray, the president of the Maharashtra Provincial Congress Committee, enquiring whether he would prefer September to August.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Rajendra Prasad
New Delhi

TELEGRAM

21 June 1950

From Foreign New Delhi
To Foreign Karachi

FOR SIR MOHD ZAFRULLAH KHAN FROM SARDAR PATEL. I AM TELEGRAPHING IN CONTINUATION OF MY TELEGRAM DATED 16 JUNE 1950 REGARDING DR. SYAMA PRASAD'S ACTIVITIES. IN REPLY TO YOUR LETTER OF 15 MAY PRIME MINISTER HAS ALREADY EXPLAINED CONSTITUTIONAL POSITION. THAT POSITION AFFECTS ACTIVITIES OF INDIVIDUALS AS WELL AS OF PRESS AND INEXTRICABLY BINDS US. SUBJECT TO THAT POSITION WE ARE DOING ALL WE CAN TO ENSURE ACTIVITIES OF INDIVIDUALS AND PRESS CONFORM TO LETTER AND SPIRIT OF AGREEMENT. DR. B. C. ROY HAS ALREADY REPLIED TO EAST PAKISTAN PREMIER ABOUT HIS COMPLAINTS OF 8 JUNE. INCIDENTS MENTIONED IN YOUR TELEGRAM HAVE ALSO BEEN FULLY DEALT WITH IN THAT CONNECTION. YOU WILL NOTICE THAT ACCOUNTS WERE EITHER BASELESS OR EXAGGERATED AND IN ANY CASE UNCONNECTED WITH DR. SYAMA PRASAD MOOKERJEE'S ACTIVITIES.

I KNOW THAT BOTH GOVERNMENT AND PRESS OF PAKISTAN ATTACH EXAGGERATED IMPORTANCE TO A SECTION OF COMMUNALISTS IN INDIA. WE KNOW THE REAL MEASURE OF THEIR STRENGTH AND IMPORTANCE AND I WOULD SUGGEST THAT PAKISTAN GOVERNMENT TRUST US TO DEAL WITH THEM IN WAY WE DEEM BEST JUST AS WE TRUST PAKISTAN GOVERNMENT TO DEAL WITH TRANSCRESSORS IN THEIR OWN TERRITORY. THIS APPLIES TO NATURE, TIMING AND DESIRABILITY OF ACTION. ANY UNTIMELY INAPPROPRIATE OR UNNECESSARY ACTION WOULD MERELY PUBLICIZE AND PROMOTE ACTIVITIES WHICH WE ARE CONFIDENT ARE MAKING NO APPRECIABLE IMPRESSION ON PUBLIC ATTITUDE TO AGREEMENT. WE FULLY SHARE PAKISTAN GOVERNMENTS DESIRE AND DETERMINATION TO MAKE IT A SUCCESS.

4 Hardinge Avenue
New Delhi
5 July 1950

Dear Sardarji,

I am taking the liberty of sending to you a copy of my note on East Bengal which I drew up on the basis of impressions gathered during our recent trip to Dacca. I was not present at meetings of the Joint Press Consultative Committee. Mr. J. N. Sahni¹ has, therefore, drawn up a supplementary note which I am also enclosing herewith. [Mr. Durga Das who was a member of the Committee gave his impressions verbally to the Sardar].

I earnestly hope that your stay at Dehra Dun has done your health good.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
B. Shiva Rao

SUPPLEMENTARY NOTE BY J. N. SAHNI ON EAST BENGAL

We hardly found anyone who was willing to stay back unless the attitude of Muslim citizens towards Hindus underwent a radical change, and unless petty executive officials evinced some desire to implement the letter and spirit of the pact. The Governor and the Chief Minister and others we met seemed either completely ignorant about this position or were deliberately trying to deny realities. They not only claimed that the pact was being implemented satisfactorily by all those concerned in the administration, but even emphasised that conditions were rapidly returning to normal. Any sense of insecurity which remained, according to them, was due to a fear complex of the Hindus which could be removed only after Hindu leaders of East Bengal returned and settled down in East Bengal and afforded to the minority community the leadership which it was lacking.

When we pointed out to the Chief Minister that as suggested by him earlier, Dr. Prafulla Ghosh and others had visited East Bengal, he tauntingly remarked that he had not asked these people to come on flying visits, but to return and settle down and assume the leadership of their people. When

¹Journalist of Delhi

Mr. Tushar Kanti Ghosh¹ remarked to the Governor that in the place of Mr. Brar, Justice Malik would have been a better choice, the Governor replied by pointing out that Justice Malik was not available since he had left East Pakistan and remarked, "Now it is such people who should return to East Bengal since they could be helpful both to the Government and the minority community. We would like you to persuade lawyers, doctors and professors particularly to return since they can help the minorities to ventilate their grievances and can afford protection to them through their influence. They will also find better livelihood in East Bengal since you have enough lawyers, doctors and professors already."

It was also felt by us in the course of our talks with Hindu leaders as well as with Pakistan Ministers and officials that the revival of trade between East and West Bengal would considerably help in decreasing the tension. While those in authority supported the policy of non-devaluation of the Pakistan rupee, they all agreed that something should be done by the two Governments to overcome the difficulties of free trading by some sort of mutual arrangement. At the airport in Dum Dum, the Pakistan rupee and the Indian rupee can be exchanged on par. What we found, however, was that at the Pakistan airport, the money-changer is also unwilling to give anything more than par value for a Pakistan rupee against the Indian rupee.

PRESS

Soon after our arrival we discovered that the relations between Mr. Rashidi² and the editors of East Bengal were seriously strained. On the day of Mr. Rashidi's arrival, leading Pakistan newspapers came out with editorials repudiating Mr. Rashidi's leadership of the Pakistan Press and decrying his public utterances. The meeting of the Inter-Dominion Information Consultative Committee and of the Joint Press Committee could not, therefore, be held till 25 June, when we were informed that an understanding had been reached between the East Bengal Press and Mr. Rashidi.

My dear Shiva Rao,

Thank you for your letter of 5 July 1950. I was interested to read the reports of Sahni and yourself.

I am afraid they do not afford quite pleasant reading and, in some respects, they are upsetting. However, truth is often

¹ Editor, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, Calcutta

² Presumably an Information officer of the Central Government of Pakistan sent to Dacca from Karachi

like that. I am glad that it has been possible for you all to devise an agreed code and that both Tushar Kanti Ghosh and Suresh Majumdar,¹ along with other Press representatives in Bengal, have accepted it. I have written to Tushar Kanti Ghosh to realise the simple tactical fact that a position has been reached when we must put the other side in the wrong rather than allow them or anybody else to point the finger at us. I hope this will also have some effect.

Dehra Dun has done me some good and I hope to return to Delhi in better health.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri B. Shiva Rao
4 Hardinge Avenue
New Delhi

1 Aurangzeb Road
New Delhi
27 March 1950

Dear Mr. Roberts,

Iengar has conveyed to me the gist of your discussion with him today regarding some anti-British propaganda in Calcutta newspapers and the need for setting at rest a feeling of uneasiness prevailing among Bengal Europeans on this account.

Yesterday, I had a discussion with Mr. [Edward] Benthall, who brought to my notice this aspect of the matter. I had a talk with the Bengal Premier yesterday and asked him to look into it. After Iengar told me about his conversation with you, I got into touch with the Bengal Premier again and he has assured me that this would claim his immediate attention, and, in fact, he has already had a talk with the Editors of the two papers who are the principal offenders and has asked them to make amends, which they have promised to do. You can rest assured that we shall see that this unfortunate development is satisfactorily dealt with and objectionable propaganda in this regard is prevented.

Regarding Mr. [A.L.] Cameron's tragic death, I am sending herewith a copy of the telegram which I have sent to Dr. Bidhan Roy.¹ We all deplore this deeply and will take all possible steps to suppress these turbulent elements as quickly as possible.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

F. K. Roberts, Esq, CMG,
Deputy High Commissioner for the UK in India
6 Albuquerque Road
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE
TELEGRAM

New Delhi
27 March 1950

West Bengal
Calcutta

FOR DOCTOR H. C. ROY FROM SARDAR PATEL. PLEASE PASS ON FOLLOWING MESSAGE TO CHAMBERS OF WHICH CAMERON WAS PRESIDENT AND HIS WIFE OR OTHER NEXT-OF-KIN, BEGINS. PROFOUNDLY SHOCKED LEARN OF MR. CAMERON'S DEATH. CRIME DISTARDLY AND INHUMAN AND NO WORDS CAN SUFFICE CONDEMN THIS BRUTAL OUTRAGE. WE HAVE LOST A FRIEND WHOSE COUNSEL WE ALL VALUED. PLEASE ACCEPT MY SINCERE SYMPATHIES IN YOUR LOSS.

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Office of the High
Commissioner for the United Kingdom
6 Albuquerque Road
New Delhi
28 March 1950

Dear Sardar Patel,

Thank you very much for your letter of 27 March about recent anti-British propaganda in the Calcutta papers and Mr. Cameron's tragic death. I have shown your letter to the High Commissioner on his return to Delhi and he is, I understand, writing to you to thank you for the action you have taken. May I also express my own thanks not only for the effective action

¹ VC, Calcutta University, 1942-44; later Chief Minister of West Bengal

you have taken but also for your courtesy in informing me so promptly of it.

Yours sincerely,
F. K. Roberts

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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Office of the High Commissioner
for the United Kingdom
6 Albuquerque Road
New Delhi
28 March 1950

My dear Sardar,

I was about to write to you to thank you for the admirable and most helpful statement which you made yesterday about Mr. A. L. Cameron's murder and for the other steps announced in this morning's papers to restore the confidence of the U.K. community there, when Roberts showed me your letter to him of 27 March. We are most grateful to you for the sympathy you have expressed on this tragic occurrence and for the effective steps you are taking to restore confidence. I am sure they will be much appreciated by the UK community in Calcutta and I should like to thank you on their behalf as well as on my own.

Yours sincerely,
Archibald Nye
[High Commissioner]

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

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Delhi
11 February 1950

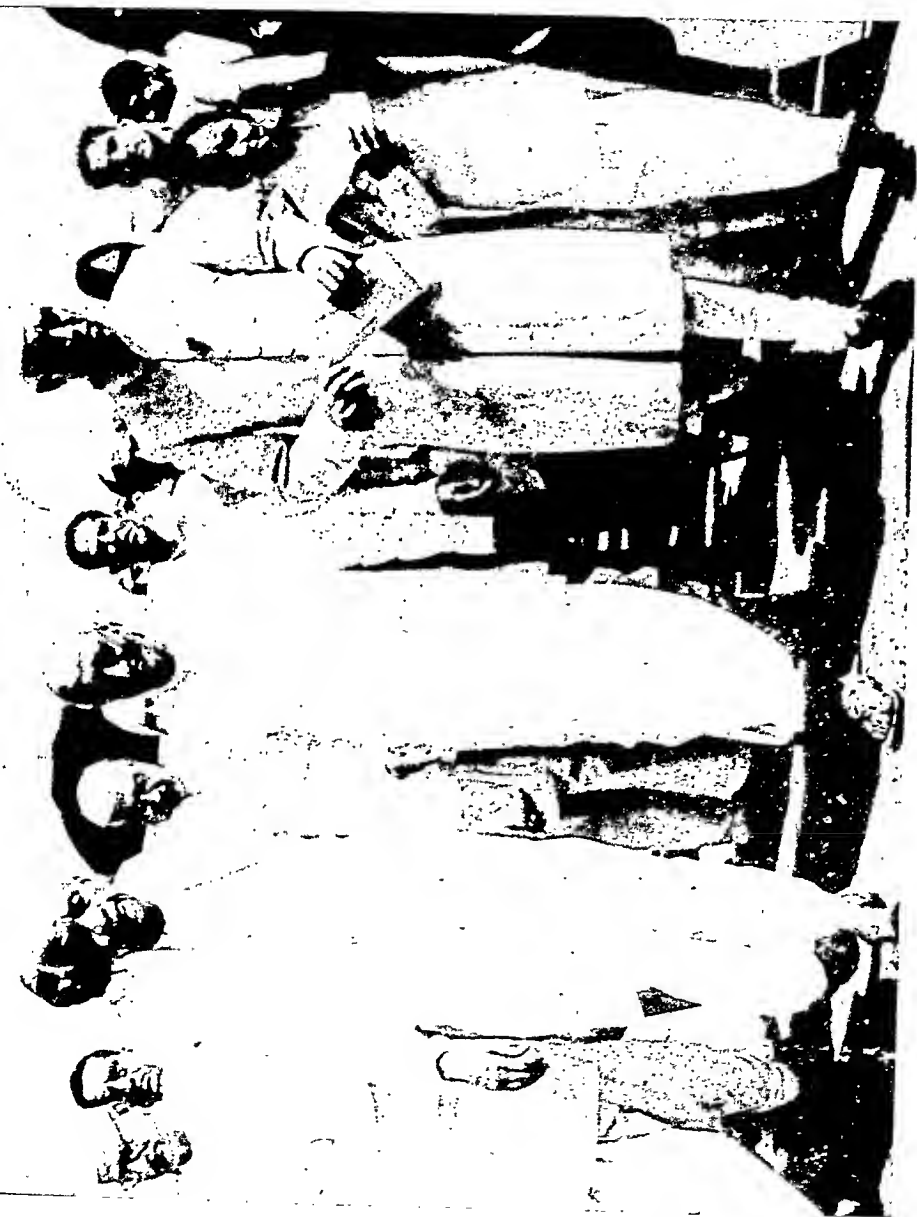
Dear Sir,

I had the honour to draw your kind attention towards the recent communal outburst at Calcutta yesterday. I regret to inform you further that I am still receiving dreadful telephonic reports from there. Maulana Zamanul Husainia, a responsible leader of the local Congress and Jamiat Ulema has arrived from



SARDAR PATEL ALONG WITH SOME OF HIS CABINET COLLEAGUES SIGNING THE CONSTITUTION IN JANUARY 1950. TO HIS LEFT ARE JOHN MATTHAI, AMRIT KAUR AND JAIRAM DAS DOULATRAM,

WHILE BEHIND HIM IS JAGJIVAN RAM



ON RELINQUISHING THE OFFICE OF ACTING GOVERNOR-GENERAL C. R. WAS GIVEN A HEARTY
SEND-OFF AT PALAM AIRPORT. SEEN IN THE GROUP ARE N. V. GADGIL, SARDAR PATEL,
JAIRAMDAS DOULATRAM AND JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Calcutta by air to place the actual facts personally. He reports that Murlibagan which is a part of Maniktalla, has been [reduced] to ashes. Narkuldanga and Raja Bazar are under fire. As a result of these disturbances over 4,000 Muslims have to take refuge in Colutola Street, which is also in the immediate grip of the miscreants. The situation is out of police and military control.

I hope you would be kind enough to take immediate steps in this regard to restore law and order in Calcutta. Further, I would request you to give me some early time for an interview to place detailed facts and latest report before you.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,
M. Hifzur Rahman
C/o Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind
Delhi

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

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New Delhi
20 February 1950

My dear Maulana Sahib,

Thank you for your letter dated 11 February 1950 which I received on the 14th.

I did not reply to you earlier as I was waiting for Maulana [A.K. Azad] Sahib's return from Calcutta. I have had a talk with him and from his account it appears that there is little to give you any cause for worry and that the need of the moment is not so much preventive or punitive action on our side as a really effective and determined action in East Bengal to put down general lawlessness and communal frenzy which seems to prevail there. The situation in Calcutta is well under control and I hope the Jamiat will take such steps as they can to impress upon the Pakistan Government and Muslim opinion in East Bengal the comparatively peaceful and normal situation in Calcutta and the need for that Government and the Muslims in East Bengal to take immediate steps to restore a similar situation in East Bengal.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Maulana Hifzur Rahman
C/o Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind
Delhi

Delhi
23 February 1950

Dear Sir,

As you know, Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind have always upheld the ideals and principles which guide the Indian National Congress. We are ever willing to do whatever we can to promote the cause of peace and communal harmony. We cherish the desire in our hearts that minorities should enjoy full protection in the neighbouring States and would do everything for it.

I request you to kindly advise us [on] the proper action we should take in the matter. What we may think to be fit and proper may not be justified from the point of view of political and state of affairs considerations and interests and we, therefore, want to seek guidance of our statesmen, yourself, Panditji and Maulana Azad. . .

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,
M. Hifzur Rahman

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

New Delhi
25 February 1950

My dear Maulana Sahib,

Thank you for your letter dated 23 February 1950.

I think what you can do immediately is to send your men to study Muslim opinion in East Bengal and also to bring back the factual position regarding the disturbances which have taken place and the position of the minorities there. You would be quite justified in representing both to the Pakistan and East Bengal Governments and the people there that, if for nothing else, at least in the interests of the Muslims in India they should

see that full protection, civic rights, etc., are safeguarded for the minorities.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Maulana Hifzur Rahman
Delhi

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New Delhi
25 April 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have decided to issue a Press statement, a copy of which I enclose. I also enclose a copy of a letter I am writing to Achyut Patwardhan.¹

On reading Kamaladevi's article on India, I disliked that very much, but I find it difficult to get hold of any specific facts which I could contradict. It is all full of insinuations. So I have not written to her separately.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE I

I suppose it is a legitimate game to try to run down political opponents. None of us can object to that, though we may regret the malice and ill-will that sometimes accompanies this criticism. But it is quite another matter when facts are twisted and something that never happened is given as a fact. It has been my misfortune to see this representation of falsehood and distortion of truth frequently in a number of periodicals. I have refrained from taking much notice of this kind of thing though I regretted deeply the lowering of tone and vulgarity of some of these publications. But this is not a personal matter and has to be judged from the public point of view. Frequent references are made to Sardar Patel and me, sometimes to my sister [Mrs. Vijayalaxmi Pandit] who is Ambassador in Washington, sometimes to other colleagues of mine serving the State in various capacities. I have

¹ Veteran freedom fighter and member, Congress Working Committee

with the least bit of political sense should believe what is written there. The central point of this article appears to be that Sardar Patel called a meeting of Congress members after Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan's departure for Karachi. This is completely untrue. I might inform you that at every stage in the course of the talks with Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan and before and after, the Cabinet was kept fully informed and it was with their consent and approval that I took every step. Sardar Patel, in particular, was in close touch with day-to-day developments and there was no difference between us on this issue. Since the agreement was signed, Sardar Patel has done more to get it implemented than anyone else. Your paper has been grossly unfair to him in this article and has done a grave disservice to the country by giving publicity to such a farrago of nonsense.

I believe that in a subsequent number of Janata a small contradiction appears of some odd fact mentioned in this article. Surely that is not only not enough but is to add insult to injury. It means that but for that fact everything else contained in this article is correct, which it is not.

I suggest to you that the least that you can do is to express an open and handsome apology to Sardar Patel and me for this article.

Jawaharlal Nehru

Shri Achyut Patwardhan
Editor, Janata
C/o Journal Press
Bombay

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Calcutta
8 September 1950

My dear Sardarji,

I am enclosing copy of a letter I have addressed to Panditji regarding certain difficulties which experience has disclosed in the actual working of the Delhi Agreement. I should be grateful to have your advice in the matter.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
C. C. Biswas

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
Bombay

ENCLOSURE

Calcutta

8 September 1950

My dear Prime Minister,

Now that Dr. Malik and I have been working together for a little over three months and a half, I think I should place before you the results of our joint working.

2. Let me first state the procedure we have been following so far. From the very beginning we have attached a good deal of importance to joint tours in the affected areas. We have already visited several districts of West Bengal, Assam and East Bengal, and we believe that these visits have done some good. At each of the places we have visited we have interviewed the local people belonging to both communities and also addressed public meetings. In his speeches and pronouncements Dr. Malik has always taken a very strong line and often lashed out at his own community. He has also repeatedly emphasised the responsibility which rests on the majority community and on Government officers. I on my part have spoken quite frankly and have exhorted the minorities on both sides to have more courage, to assert their rights, and to resist the wrong-doers. All this has doubtless helped to some extent to strengthen the morale of the minority community. The very fact that the minorities could come and speak to us about their difficulties without fear could not but give them a sense of relief, and it must also have heartened them a good deal to find that two Central Ministers from the two countries had been working together for them, visiting the affected areas, listening to their grievances, and probing into matters concerning their welfare. It would not be too much to state that our speeches and talks not only infused some hope and confidence into the minorities, but also put fear into the minds of wrong-doers, and strengthened the hands of men of goodwill in the majority community who were working for communal harmony. Our visits and our meetings have also given the Agreement much-needed publicity.

3. Apart from the joint tours, the two Central Ministers have met and discussed various matters between themselves. I wish the meetings could be more frequent, but this has not been possible because the Central Ministers have generally dispersed after their joint tours and also because of Dr. Malik's preoccupations in connection with his other public engagements. In some cases, not very many, involving questions of a very general character affecting principle or procedure, we have put forward joint proposals to the two Governments for their consideration, but, generally speaking, we have not

sought to make use of the power given to us under Section F (ix) of the Delhi Agreement of making any joint recommendations to the two Governments in respect of individual complaints. Such joint recommendations, as you know, should, under the terms of the Agreement, be normally binding on the two Governments.

4. As far as individual complaints from the minorities of East Bengal are concerned, the practice has been to refer them to the Government of East Bengal for remedial action. Such cases had been up to now taken up directly with that Government either by the Government of West Bengal or by our Deputy High Commissioner in Dacca. On my part I have avoided direct approach to the Government of East Bengal. Whenever I have thought it fit to intervene, my channel of communication has been through my opposite number, Dr. Malik, and my secretary has also been in communication only with Dr. Malik's secretary. As a rule, my office has been sending to Dr. Malik's office copies of letters written by the Government of West Bengal or by the Deputy High Commissioner to the Government of East Bengal in respect of the more serious cases. Complaints which come to me or my office direct from the parties are also referred to Dr. Malik or his office. It is only where the incidents seem to be of a serious character or to involve a glaring breach of the Agreement or to call for immediate action that I write to Dr. Malik myself, asking for his personal intervention with the East Bengal authorities. My secretary has also been sending to Dr. Malik's office periodical consolidated lists of incidents of various kinds in different districts of which we receive reports.

5. I must admit that the procedure followed has not resulted in bringing any speedy or substantial relief to the sufferers. In fact, we have so far received very few replies from Dr. Malik or his office, nor any reports from them as to the action taken in respect of the various matters brought to their notice. Yet I do not know what more could be done on our side in order to secure effective remedial action by the Government of East Bengal. Neither the Government of West Bengal nor I as Central Minister of India have any authority over that Government, and I doubt if Dr. Malik as Central Minister of Pakistan has also any constitutional power to issue a directive to the Government of East Bengal. The utmost Dr. Malik can do is to exercise his influence and powers of persuasion with that Government, as I may do in the case of the Governments of West Bengal and Assam.

6. It does not seem to me to be a practical proposition that the two Central Ministers should try to make up for this lack of power or authority by resort to the expedient of making joint recommendations themselves in every individual case (at any rate in every important individual case), with a view to ensure prompt remedial action by the Provincial or State Government concerned under the terms of Section F (ix) of the Delhi Pact. I do not think

that such a procedure was contemplated by the Agreement. For one thing, if the two Central Ministers started dealing with individual cases, they would be completely overwhelmed. Secondly, the lack of requisite or adequate machinery would in practice render their functioning in this way wholly ineffective, if not entirely impossible. If the Central Ministers are to make a joint recommendation as regards specific action to be taken in any particular case, it is necessary that they should first be able to cause a full enquiry to be made into the matter; they could hardly be expected to make the enquiry themselves in every case. But the Central Ministers have no effective agency at their disposal through which such enquiry could be made. I do not suppose the Minority Commissions or the District Minority Boards were intended to be utilised as agents for such a purpose. Besides, I am not aware that the Minority Commission in East Bengal or even the District Minority Boards there are functioning or are capable of functioning actively enough to be effective agents for making enquiries regarding individual cases that may be reported to us. The Provincial Government concerned might perhaps be asked to make such enquiries to enable the two Central Ministers to make a joint recommendation as to the action to be taken in any particular case. But in practice this would often mean an enquiry by the very officer or officers whose action is reported against. Nextly, as neither Central Minister would have any independent authority over the State or Provincial Government other than his own, or over the Minority Commission or the District Minority Boards there, a directive for an enquiry would, in any case, itself require a joint recommendation from both the Central Ministers, and it is needless to say that such a procedure, apart from anything else, could hardly make for expeditious results.

7. I have had a discussion on the subject with Dr. B. C. Roy. He is of opinion that the Central Ministers should not hesitate to make larger use of their power under Section F (ix) of the Agreement to make joint recommendations with a view to compel action by the Provincial or State Government in specific cases. He thinks that unless effective steps are taken to ensure speedy remedial action, it is useless to expect the return of confidence among the minorities. As regards the making of enquiries into individual complaints, he suggests that the Central Ministers should more frequently utilise the services of the Minority Commission for the purpose. In Dr. Roy's opinion, we have had sufficient experience already to show how necessary it is to take action on some such line within the existing framework of the Agreement, if the Agreement is not to be wholly inoperative.

8. Dr. Roy may be right in what he says from a certain point of view, but apart from the difficulties I have already indicated in paragraph 6 above, it is not unlikely that if the Central Ministers were to follow his suggestions and try and make joint recommendations in individual cases, this might result in the

end in producing more disagreement than agreement between them, and in consequence involve the making of numerous references to the two Prime Ministers for dissolving the disagreement. It would also unnecessarily add to the difficulties of the Central Ministers if the Minority Commission to which they might refer a case for enquiry failed to produce a joint report.

9. I may also refer to a serious practical difficulty which is bound to arise in trying to give effect to Dr. Roy's suggestions, as this would involve very frequent, if not continuous, joint meetings between the two Central Ministers, which it might not be possible to arrange. As already indicated, even at present the Central Ministers could not meet as often as they should like to. We have on our side the branch office of the Ministry of External Affairs in Calcutta. But Dr. Malik has no corresponding office at Dacca where we could meet for joint discussions. So far as I know, his headquarters are still at Karachi and he is often required to go there. All this has already been a serious hindrance to frequent personal discussions between us.

10. I am placing the whole matter before you for your consideration and should be grateful to have your suggestions and directions. The first point which arises is whether it was intended by the Pact that the two Central Ministers should function in the way suggested by Dr. Roy, that is to say, (i) that the implementation of the Pact in individual cases should be the sole or main responsibility of the Central Ministers, and not of the Provincial Governments, (ii) that the Minority Commissions and the District Minority Boards were to be the organs of the two Central Ministers, rather than of the Provincial Governments, constituting, in fact, the Central Ministers' machinery for enquiries and fact-finding, and (iii) that the Central Ministers were to enforce actual implementation of the Pact by the Provincial or State Government in individual cases by recourse to the procedure of making joint recommendations. Secondly if such was not the intention of the Pact, but it is nevertheless felt that the Central Ministers should function in the way indicated and be in a position to enforce implementation of the Pact in individual cases, it should be a point for consideration whether or not (i) the functions and responsibilities of the two Central Ministers should be restated in clearer and wider terms, (ii) a more effective machinery than seems to exist at present should be devised to operate directly under their authority, and (iii) a simpler procedure than that of making joint recommendations evolved, which would give each Central Minister some operational powers over the Provincial Government of the other State, at least in the matter of directing enquiries and supplying information.

11. If I have understood Dr. Roy correctly, he thinks that the initiative in respect of all matters relating to the implementation on the Agreement should be taken by the Central Ministers, and he accordingly suggests that I should, whenever necessary, make a direct approach to the Government of East Bengal.

He also thinks that this would be a quicker and more effective method of obtaining remedial action. Dr. Roy has, in fact, for some time past discontinued his practice of dealing with the East Bengal Government direct and been referring individual cases to me to take them up with that Government. Personally I do not see any advantage in the suggested change of procedure. As I have already said, I have no authority over the Government of East Bengal any more than the Government of West Bengal have, but a convention has already been established of one Provincial Government approaching the other for necessary action. In my view, there is no reason for departing from this practice. Speaking for myself, I as Central Minister of India should hesitate to bypass the Pakistan Central Minister and make a direct approach to the East Bengal Government. I think we should thereby lose the advantage of Dr. Malik's exercising his influence and good offices with that Government. I should think a direct approach by one Provincial Government to the other would, in the normal course, be a quicker way of producing results.

12. Taking everything into consideration, I should think that the best course in the circumstances would be to establish a convention that each Provincial Government should normally act according to the advice of its own Central Minister. The Central Minister would naturally tender such advice after considering the point of view of his Provincial Government, and, whenever possible, consulting his opposite number.

13. I am sending a copy of this letter to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Dr. Roy.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
C. C. Biswas

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister
New Delhi

Bombay
14 September 1950

My dear Biswas,

Thank you for your letter dated 8 September 1950.

I think we should fully exploit the machinery provided in the Agreement for its implementation; otherwise, it would mean that the main merit of the Agreement and the feature which distinguished it from previous agreements would be gone. It is quite

possible that the utilisation of the machinery provided would induce the East Bengal Government to play fair. They will then realise that these instances and breaches will not go uninvestigated and the executive machinery will have to act.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri C. C. Biswas
Minister of State
Ministry of External Affairs
Branch Secretariat
Calcutta

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Camp Bombay
14 September 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Biswas has sent a copy of his letter to you dated 8 September 1950. I entirely agree with what Bidhan [Dr. B.C.Roy] has told Biswas about this matter. As you will recall, one of the most important reasons which we held as justifying this Agreement was the fact that it provided for a machinery for implementation. If we do not utilise that machinery we would be making a serious omission and it would not be possible to justify it at all. Whatever risks, difficulties or handicaps that might be involved in utilising this machinery should, in my opinion, be faced. As it is, people are not satisfied with the way the Pact is working in actual practice. To give them a further chance of saying that the machinery laid down in the Pact has been deliberately ignored by us would be a very serious matter indeed and we would be inviting both ridicule and censure on us.

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister
New Delhi

TELEGRAM

New Delhi
21 February 1950

Mrs. Sarat Bose
1 Woodburn Park
Calcutta

DEEPLY GRIEVED TO LEARN OF SARATBABU'S DEATH. WE ALL MOURN HIM AS ONETIME VALUED COLLEAGUE, A FEARLESS AND BRAVE FIGHTER OF FREEDOM'S BATTLE AND A FELLOW SUFFERER IN COUNTRY'S CAUSE. LATTERLY WE PARTED COMPANY AND THAT CAUSED US CONSIDERABLE PAIN AND SORROW BUT WE ALWAYS RECOGNISED HONESTY OF DIFFERENCES AND SINCERITY OF HIS CONVICTIONS. HIS PATRIOTISM AND ZEAL TO SERVE PROVINCE AND COUNTRY WILL STAND OUT IN HIS LONG AND DISTINGUISHED CAREER. BENGAL IN ITS PRESENT TERRIBLE AGONY COULD ILL AFFORD HIS LOSS. HE SERVED TO THE LAST BREATH OF HIS LIFE. YOU AND YOUR FAMILY CAN HAVE CONSOLATION THAT SO MANY OF YOUR COUNTRYMEN SHARE YOUR LOSS. MY SINCERE CONDOLENCES AND SYMPATHIES.

VALLABHBHAI

CHAPTER VI
TEXTILE CRISIS

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Bombay
18 January 1950

My dear Sardar Sahib,

We are sorry to disturb you in your manifold activities but we have to write to you in order that our views may be clear to you.

When we met you in a deputation in Bombay at Birla House about finding a solution of the textile crisis, it was decided to submit to you a draft. The draft which was discussed by us all will be presented to you. Myself and Mr. Amritlal made some *suggestions at our meetings for equitable distribution of Indian cotton* so that cloth prices may not have to be raised, but there was no agreement. Both of us wrote on the next day, before it was to be drafted, our very modified suggestion about pointing out the importance of equitable distribution of cotton. After a week the draft was given to us as final and we found that the suggestions were not incorporated.

We have to bring to your kind notice that we have a different view on the following points in the suggestion made to you:

1. We dropped the idea of suggesting equitable distribution for the sake of unanimity but we asked them to point out to you that if Government is not able to devise steps to ensure for each unit its equitable quota or distribution of cotton, cotton prices will have to be raised to correspond to the prevailing price of cotton. (This meant that the industry was not in a position to present a solution but pointed out to Government the importance of devising measures of equitable distribution if cloth prices were not to be raised).

2. Sufficient cloth for internal consumption has to be produced to avoid soaring prices owing to scarcity and consequent unrest amongst the masses. Foreign cotton is available and could be used to ensure adequate production and the disadvantage of using foreign cotton is exaggerated.

3. It was also agreed to suggest that the mills should pay 6% as an export tax to Government out of its higher price of 12% or

out of the unrestricted higher price to be realised by the mills for exported cloth over the prices to be charged in the country. The suggestion, although agreed upon by all, is not incorporated.

Mr. Amritlal is in Ahmedabad and he has agreed with me in writing this letter to you on his and my behalf in order that our views may not be misunderstood when you give your thought to the draft.

Hoping to be excused for troubling you and wishing you in excellent health,

I remain,
Yours obediently,
Chandulal P. Parikh¹

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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New Delhi
19 January 1950

My dear Sardarji,

Thank you for your letter regarding control of cotton. The note which was circulated to the Economic Committee clearly indicated that a policy decision regarding next year should be taken as soon as possible. There was no suggestion at any time that control could or should be withdrawn for this year's crop. That will produce disastrous results both on the prices of cotton and of textiles. We will however have to consider very seriously what we propose to do regarding control of next year's crop. Along with this obviously control of textiles will also come up for examination. I agree with you that this matter should be examined as part of an integrated policy affecting cotton, foodgrains and other crops. This matter may be discussed by the Economic Committee and by the Cabinet as a whole. Much can be said on both sides and we should not take any hurried step which may result in any further upsetting of the country's economy.

I am suggesting to [John] Matthai² that a preliminary discussion may be held at a meeting of the Economic Committee of the Cabinet which you should attend. In fact I raised this general question at our meeting two days ago and it was felt it should be taken up separately as soon as possible.

We had an informal discussion at a conference of provincial Ministers and the unanimous view was expressed that cotton and textiles control should be continued for the present, the whole matter being re-examined at a later date in relation to wider matters of policy affecting control as such.

A summary of the recommendations of the industrialists attached to your letter should also be considered at the meeting of the Economic Committee. This raises fundamental questions regarding continuance of control in any form.

Yours sincerely,
Syama Prasad Mookerjee

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

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New Delhi
6 February 1950

My dear Syama Prasad,

I am sending herewith a copy of the Industrialists' Report about which I wrote to you some time ago and the recommendations which I suggested might be considered by the Economic Committee of the cabinet. I should like to be present at the discussions. Perhaps we could have it here some time next week.

I am sending the report in original to you so that it could be on the records of the Economic Committee. As you know, these business men met at my instance in order to produce a scheme to improve the present conditions of trade and industry, with particular reference to cotton textiles.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee
Minister for Industry & Supply
New Delhi

SUMMARY OF THE INDUSTRIALISTS' REPORT

To recapitulate, the several recommendations made by us may be summarised as under:

1. The industrialists should be asked to supply food articles, fuel and clothing at pre-war prices. The quantities to be supplied in this manner should

be fixed on a rationed basis. The necessary adjustment be made in the calculation of the working class cost of living index numbers for purposes of computing dearness allowance.

2. The target of production of cloth should be fixed at least at 4,100 million yards, plus exports, if any, to Pakistan.

3. To attain this target, arrangements should be made for supplying to the Indian textile industry cotton to the extent of 41 lakhs bales of usable varieties, excluding any provision for exports of cotton and extra-factory consumption.

4. Government have already decided to increase the cotton crop to 30 lakhs bales in the next year. We recommend that the target should be revised to 35 lakhs of bales and the balance of cotton requirements should be met by imports of cotton.

5. In order to secure the necessary acreage for cultivation of cotton, Government should immediately announce decontrol of cotton for the next cotton year.

6. A limit of 400 million yards should be placed on the export of cloth made from Indian cotton.

7. The excise duty on super-fine cloth should be reduced from 25 per cent to 10 per cent.

8. The import duty on cotton should be abolished.

9. The control over production should be abolished and the enforcement branch wound up.

10. An increase in cloth prices should be granted to the extent of 8 per cent in coarse and medium varieties. If the import duty on cotton be abolished, an increase of only 6½ % be granted in super-fine varieties.

11. The control over distribution of coal should be abolished.

12. Sales tax should be levied on a uniform basis in all provinces on a single point system and its quantum should not be allowed to exceed half an anna in the rupee.

13. The rationing of foodgrains should be restricted to industrial areas and larger cities.

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New Delhi

7 February 1950

My dear Sardarji,

Thank you for your letter and the copy of the industrialists' report. I am sending it to Mathai requesting him to call a meeting of the Economic Committee some time next week according to your convenience. The meeting will be held at your house.

Meanwhile the report may be examined by the Secretaries' Committee as well.

Yours sincerely,
Syama Prasad

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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EXTRACT

New Delhi
21 March 1950

My dear Syama Prasad,

I also notice that the question of cotton control is down for discussion at today's Economic Committee. I have gone through this note. I am naturally interested in this problem and would like an opportunity of discussing it with the members of the Economic Committee before it is finalised. I notice, however, that in the note there is no reference to the views of the industrialists, which had been sent to me some time in February and a copy of which I had sent to you. I think it was agreed at the time that that note would also be considered in the Economic Committee simultaneously with the question of cotton control. I would, therefore, suggest your taking that report into consideration before you discuss this matter, even tentatively, in the Economic Committee.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

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EXTRACT

New Delhi
22 March 1950

My dear Sardarji,

Regarding cotton, the note of the Industrialists has already been forwarded to the Economic Committee. I am suggesting that this also should be placed on the agenda. I am also proposing that you should be invited to the meeting.

Yours sincerely,
Syama Prasad

New Delhi
17 April 1950

My dear Kaul,

Please refer to your letter of 15 April 1950 regarding cotton policy for the year 1950-51. I am sending herewith a note which contains H.M.'s views on this subject.

Yours sincerely,
V. Shankar

Shri B. N. Kaul
Deputy Secretary
Cabinet Secretariat
New Delhi

SECRETARIAT OF THE ECONOMIC COMMITTEE OF THE CABINET

SUMMARY FOR THE CABINET

SUBJECT: COTTON POLICY FOR THE YEAR 1950-51

A paper prepared by the Ministry of Industry and Supply for the consideration of the Economic Committee of the Cabinet on the cotton policy for the year 1950-51 has already been circulated to Hon'ble Ministers under this Secretariat No. F.15(5)-P/50 dated 20 March 1950.

2. The recommendations made by the Ministry of Industry and Supply were considered by the Economic Committee at their meeting on 12 April 1950. The Committee had before them the observations made by the Planning Commission on the subject, a copy of the note containing which had also been circulated to Hon'ble Ministers under this Secretariat No. 15(2)-P/50 dated 6 April 1950 and 14 April 1950 to Members of the Economic Committee of Cabinet and other Ministers respectively. The Committee had also had a discussion with the Members of the Planning Commission.

3. The Committee agreed with the view that there should be no decontrol of cotton prices for the present. The arguments against decontrol of cotton prices have been fully given in the paper prepared by the Ministry of Industry and Supply and the Committee generally agreed with the same.

4. The Committee also agreed that all possible steps should be taken to increase the production of cotton in the country. They therefore accepted the

proposal that all State Governments should be asked to remove all legislative and executive restriction on the growing of cotton and to extend irrigation facilities for the growing of cotton crops. It followed that an assurance must also be given to the State Governments that if any land was diverted from maize to cotton thus reducing the foodgrain supply in any State, the Central Government would make available to the State an additional supply of foodgrains to the extent of the deficiency. The Committee agreed that this assurance should be given.

5. The Committee also agreed with the view that some incentive, additional to what was available to the cultivator at present, should be given to induce him to grow more cotton. It was agreed that the mere raising of ceiling prices of cotton by Rs. 150 per candy, which would only legalise the prices prevalent at the moment, would not give the cultivator any additional incentive. On the other hand, the Committee did not agree that the grant of a bonus per acre at an estimated cost of Rs. 3½ crores as suggested by the Planning Commission would be suitable. Firstly, the proposal was too costly and could not be agreed to by the Finance Ministry in view of the other developments that had taken place since the budget was presented. Secondly, it would be difficult to administer a system of payment of cash bonus. In many cases the bonus would not reach the cultivator at all. Even if it reached the cultivator, it would take a long time before it could be paid and it would be shared by a number of persons before payment. The Committee accordingly decided that the only practicable proposal was to sanction a complete remission of land revenue on all additional acres of land put under cotton in the season 1950-51. They decided that this proposal should be adopted in consultation with the State Governments and that the Central Government would make good to the States the loss of revenues on this account. This loss is estimated to be of the order of Rs. 60 to 70 lakhs only.

6. On the question of control of kapas prices, the view of the Ministry of Industry and Supply was that introduction of this control next season would be necessary in order to ensure the success of the policy of control over cotton prices and supply of cotton at reasonable prices to textile mills. The Economic Committee considered that the difficulties in administering a system of kapas control were enormous. Further there was a risk that the psychological effect of the announcement of such a control at the present moment would nullify to a great extent the incentive that the cultivator would get from the decision to grant him remission of land revenue on any additional land sown with cotton. For the same reason, the Committee did not agree with the proposal that no announcement need be made on the question of introduction of kapas control at this stage. In the opinion of the Committee, this also would raise doubts in the mind of the cultivator and the psychological effect thereof would be the same as announcement of kapas control. The

Committee therefore decided that it should be definitely announced now that in view of the long-term interest of the country the Government have decided that no control on kapas prices would be introduced.

7. A point had been made that in the absence of announcement of the introduction of control over kapas prices, the textile industry would feel that its position was completely insecure and this would lead to further closure of mills. It had been suggested that to avoid such an eventuality, an announcement should be made that in any case the cotton ceiling prices in the next season would be increased by about Rs. 150 per candy. The Economic Committee have considered this suggestion. During the current season a similar system had resulted in mills paying prices for cotton higher than the prescribed ceiling prices. The situation could no doubt have been avoided if the textile industry had agreed amongst themselves to follow a co-ordinated policy for buying cotton, but to make this observation was no solution to the problem. The Committee, however, hoped that the adoption of the measures now decided upon would lead to a substantial increase in the availability of Indian cotton in the next season and that this would stabilise cotton prices at a level lower than that actually paid by textile mills in the recent past. On this assumption, there would be no justification for announcing the ceiling prices of cotton for the next season based on past prices of kapas. It would be preferable to wait and watch the acreage actually sown under cotton and the state of the crop before making an announcement. The Committee, therefore, considered that the ceiling prices for cotton for the next season should be announced some time later in the year after taking a view of the estimated crop of the next season, but that an assurance should be given to the textile industry now that the present ceilings would be suitably adjusted in the light of market conditions prevailing at the time.

8. The Economic Committee are accordingly of the opinion that the announcement regarding cotton policy for the year 1950-51 should be on the following lines:

- (a) There would be no decontrol of cotton prices.
- (b) Ceiling prices for cotton would be announced later in the year.
- (c) Immediate announcement would be made that there would be no control on kapas prices, and State Governments asked to remove all legislative and executive restrictions on the growing of cotton and to extend irrigation facilities.
- (d) A further incentive to the cultivator would be given by remission of land revenue on additional land placed under cotton in consultation with the State Governments, the Central Government making good to the States any loss of revenues on this account.

- (e) An assurance would be given to the State Governments that if due to the diversion of any land to cotton, the foodgrain supply in any State is reduced, an additional supply of foodgrains to the extent of the deficiency would be made available to the State.
- (f) An assurance would be given to the textile industry that the current ceiling prices of cotton would be adjusted later in light of the market conditions at the time.

9. Approval of the Cabinet is solicited, the Ministries of Industry and Supply and Agriculture being authorised to make a policy announcement on these lines.

P. C. Bhattacharyya
Secretary,

Economic Committee of Cabinet

The Cabinet Secretariat
14 April 1950

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New Delhi
14 February 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

You will recall that some time ago we had a discussion in the Cabinet on the Industries (Development & Control) Bill. It was then decided that amendments should be made in the Bill on the lines of the discussion in the Cabinet. As far as I remember, during the Cabinet discussion, it was made clear that price fluctuations should not be made a reason for taking over an industry as this would create apprehensions and deter foreign capital from coming; that the only ground for taking over an industry should be gross mismanagement; that location and size of the industrial unit need not be important considerations in licensing but that licensing should be effected more with the object of diversion of capital to the industries which are considered more desirable than others; and that only a small number of important basic industries should be covered in regard to control, whereas in regard to other important industries only the provisions relating to licensing should apply.

I find that the Bill, as it has emerged out of the Select Committee, does not go sufficiently far in dealing with these points. Also, in spite of the position being made clear, the location of industrial undertaking has been made the subject of a licence. The arrangement also is that an industrial board would be the

agency through which control would be exercised. There is no safeguard against the dilatoriness of such a board. Moreover, with our Planning Commission functioning, there might be conflict between the Planning Commission and the industrial board, in that, while the board might be of one mind, the Commission might be of the other, and since the board would be the statutory organisation, its wishes would prevail over the recommendations of the Planning Commission. The powers of inspection given to officers are far too wide as also the powers to issue directives. The schedule [see enclosure] also, although divided into two parts, does not to my mind carry out the point made in the Cabinet, namely, that powers of control should be restricted to only certain key basic industries. On the whole, therefore, I feel that in view of the likely repercussions of such a Bill, on both indigenous and foreign investors, the matter requires very careful consideration before the Industry & Supply Minister makes any further motion in regard to this Bill.

There is also another reason connected with the composition of the Cabinet, of which you are aware, which would, in my opinion, justify postponement of this measure for the time being. I would, therefore, suggest that for the present we do not proceed with this measure. In the meantime, we should circulate the Select Committee Report and the Bill to the Hon'ble Ministers for their comments. If necessary, the question might be discussed in the Cabinet again in the light of the comments received from Hon'ble Ministers.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

- 5 Motor and aviation fuel, kerosene, crude oils and synthetic oils
- 6 Salt
- 7 Ships and other vessels propelled by the agency of steam or by electricity or other mechanical power
- 8 Sugar
- 9 Telephones, telegraph apparatus and wireless communication apparatus
- 10 Textile made wholly or in part of cotton or jute

PART II

- 1 Automobiles, including tractors
- 2 Cement
- 3 Electric lamps and fans
- 4 Electric motors
- 5 Heavy chemicals including fertilizers
- 6 Heavy machinery used in industry including ball and roller bearing and gear wheels and parts thereof, boilers and steam-generating equipment
- 7 Locomotives and rolling stock
- 8 Machine tools
- 9 Machinery and equipment for the generation, transmission and distribution of electric energy
- 10 Non-ferrous metals including alloys
- 11 Paper and newsprint
- 12 Pharmaceuticals and drugs
- 13 Power and industrial alcohol
- 14 Rubber goods
- 15 Tea
- 16 *Textiles made of wool*
- 17 Vanaspathi

New Delhi
14 February 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Your letter of the 14th about the Industries Bill. I have not seen this as it has come out of the Select Committee.

I am asking Syama Prasad Mookerjee to circulate it to Ministers and if necessary to place it before the Cabinet.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

New Delhi
21 February 1950

My dear Sardarji,

Please refer to your demi-official letter dated 12 February 1950 asking for a note on the action taken on the recommendations of the Standing Committee of the Central Advisory Council of Industries which met in November last. You will recollect that the main recommendations of the Committee concerned:

- (i) the formation of Target Committees in respect of some important industries and, in particular, in those the products of which enter into the general cost of living and
- (ii) the constitution of working parties for cotton textiles, coal, heavy engineering and sugar industries.

2. Regarding these matters, you have no doubt seen Bhoothalingam's¹ D.O. letter dated 6 December 1950 addressed to Shankar which contains a preliminary report on the progress made in

¹ ICS; Special Secretary, Ministry of Industry, until June, 1955; Secretary, Ministry of Steel, Mines and Fuel, 1955-61; Ministry of Finance, Department of Expenditure, 1961-62; Ministry of Economic and Defence Co-ordination, 1962-63; Director-General, National Council of Applied Economic Research, New Delhi, since September 1967

implementing these decisions. Since then, Target Committees with representatives of industry have been formed for the following industries:

1. Aluminium
2. Diesel oil engines
3. Motor and cycle tyres
4. Power alcohol
5. Plywood
6. Refractories
7. Glass
8. Paper
9. Sulphuric acid
10. Superphosphates

of which Nos. 1 to 7 have already met. The reports of aluminium, diesel oil engines, motor and cycle tyres and plywood target committees have been received and are under our examination. The Labour Ministry has been requested to recommend nominees for similar committees representing labour.

3. In addition to the industries mentioned above, we had originally intended to form target committees also for coal, iron and steel and cotton textiles. Since then, however, we have abandoned the idea of forming target committees for these industries for the following reasons.

Coal: It is felt that as long as coal movements to Pakistan remain suspended, it is not desirable, in view of the curtailment of demand, to take any active steps to achieve a target of production higher than the record production already reached in 1949, viz., 31.4 million tons.

Cotton Textiles: Here too we find that a target committee can achieve very little in view of the fact that production of cotton textiles during the year depends entirely on the availability of cotton, which is expected to be much less than the quantity required. It is felt that in such circumstances no amount of mismanagement or labour trouble can prevent textiles production reaching a level adequate for consuming the rather low supply of cotton available. In fact, a fairly large portion of the capacity is likely to remain idle in any case.

Iron & Steel: Here, we felt that as the production programmes of the two major producers, viz., Tatas and SCOB, are already closely controlled by the Iron & Steel Controller, no

useful purpose was likely to be served by forming a separate target committee for the industry. We have, however, fixed the following targets for the individual producers:

Tatas	..	768,000	tons
SCOB	..	240,000	„
Mysore	..	24,000	„

The Iron & Steel Controller, from the monthly reports received by him, will be in a position to watch the progress of production.

4. As regards the constitution of the working parties, Ramaswami Mudaliar and Panna Lal have agreed to accept the Chairmanship of two of these, and I am thinking of asking B. Das to be the Chairman of the third. The formation of these working parties has been held up only because the Labour Ministry and ourselves have not so far been able to agree on the labour representatives to be nominated on them. I hope however that the matter will be settled very soon.

We requested the Agriculture Ministry to form a working party on the sugar industry. I understand that they have finalised their proposals which are now being considered by H.M. Agriculture.

Apart from the action indicated above on the two main recommendations of the Standing Committee, I also enclose a note on the action taken by us on the few other points that were mooted at the November meeting.

Yours sincerely,
Syama Prasad

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

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New Delhi
25 February 1950

My dear Syama Prasad,

Thank you for your letter dated 21 February 1950 regarding the recommendations of the Standing Committee of the Central Advisory Council of Industries which met in November last.

I appreciate the reasons for not setting up the Target Committees in respect of coal, cotton textiles and iron and steel. In

- (3) That effective anti-malaria measures should be taken to make the functioning of these pits possible.

As has been indicated in the note, if the above steps are not taken, the target for jute production which could be reached would be reduced from 50 to 44 lakh bales. I think it is very desirable that the Bengal Chief Minister should be moved by you to take the steps which seem to be necessary for our jute programme.

I had mentioned this matter in our morning talk and you wished me to send you a note on this question.

Yours sincerely,
Jairamdas Doulatram

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

The Additional Secretary, Sir Datar Singh, returned from Calcutta under the impression that the Government of West Bengal (the Hon'ble Chief Minister and the Ministers concerned) had agreed to repeal the Jute Control Act. I have just enquired from the Secretary, Agriculture, West Bengal, as to the progress of the legislation to repeal the Act. He tells me that the idea of a repeal has been given up because there is a constitutional hitch. Notice of the amendment repealing the Act was not given at the beginning of the session. A Bill can, therefore, be introduced during the session only with the approval of the Speaker. The Chief Minister does not feel inclined to ask for the approval, and he feels that the object will be served by issuing executive orders that the regulations under the Act should not be enforced. The West Bengal Government is prepared to give publicity to this order so that it should be known to every person. The Chief Minister is prepared to issue an ordinance repealing the Act as soon as the session is over which would be by the end of March or April. Personally, I don't feel very happy about this because no amount of executive instructions can offset the effect of an Act which still remains on the Statute book. The village officials may find it profitable to ignore the executive instructions and point out the Act to the cultivators. The same kind of situation with regard to cotton prevails in Bombay with unsatisfactory results. If the Cabinet were of one mind and firm that jute must be grown even at the cost of diversion from foodgrains, they would not hesitate to request the Speaker for permission to introduce

the Bill. It must often happen that during a long session the Government cannot anticipate what legislation will be brought forward.

Mr. Dey also mentioned that the Government of West Bengal did not feel that the area which West Bengal can increase is beyond 2 lakh acres. The difficulty is the lack of ratting facilities and the time is too short for providing these by the excavation and improvement of the existing tanks. We had suggested that special ratting pits should be constructed out of a subsidy furnished by the Central Government; but the Health authorities in West Bengal are adamant and will not permit these ratting pits being dug for fear of spreading malaria. The situation, therefore, is not satisfactory and we cannot work up to a target of 50 lakhs bales. The utmost that can be expected is 44 lakhs bales.

I feel that the stake is big enough to make an approach to the Government of West Bengal at a high level asking (1) that special permission should be obtained to introduce a Bill to repeal the Jute Control Act and (2) that the ratting pits should be permitted to be dug in order to increase the present area by 4 lakh acres during the next year.

K. L. Punjabi
Secretary

13-2-50

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New Delhi
16 February 1950

My dear Jairamdas,

Thank you for your letter dated 14 February 1950 regarding difficulties in increasing jute production in Bengal.

2. I am sending herewith a sealed cover addressed to Bidhan [Dr. B.C. Roy] which you might send with Punjabi. I am attaching a copy of my letter for your record.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri Jairamdas Doulatram
Minister for Food and Agriculture
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

New Delhi

16 February 1950

My dear Bidhan,

Datar Singh has returned after a tour of some of the States in a drive for greater production of jute and cotton. I am addressing you in regard to jute where we propose to have a target of 50 lakhs bales. He got the impression that you would be repealing the Jute Control Act which we regard as essential if we have to achieve the target mentioned above. Apparently you held the view that you would not be justified in asking for the Speaker's leave to introduce a repealing Bill and you would prefer to pass an ordinance after the present session of the Legislature is over. I am not quite clear as regards your difficulty in asking for permission to introduce the Bill. We experience no such difficulty here and we can introduce any Bill at any time so long as the Legislature is in session. The legislative programme which we give at the beginning of the session is obviously tentative and it is open to us to make a departure in any way we like. I hope the same holds true of your State, but in case it is different, I think the sooner you follow our practice the better. In any case, I think it would be unwise to leave matters to executive instructions and not to repeal the Act. We are more likely to be criticised for not implementing a law which is on the Statute Book than for seeking permission of the Chair to introduce that Bill if such permission is necessary. Moreover, we have an unfortunate experience of a similar arrangement in Bombay. There they tried to secure some results by means of executive instructions keeping in abeyance the enforcement of the Bill and we found that the results were not as satisfactory as we would wish. I hope, therefore, that it will be possible for you to reconsider this matter.

2. Our Agricultural Ministry also feels that unless ratting pits are dug, the additional area cannot be increased to 4 lakhs [bales] with the result that our target will not be realised. I understand that your Health authorities object to it on the ground of increase in the incidence of malaria which this might lead to. I hope that is not correct. However, even if it be correct, I think it should be possible for you to take effective anti-malaria measures. They have already suggested to you that special ratting pits could be constructed out of a subsidy furnished by the Central Government. I think this should be quite adequate for you and on this assurance you could go ahead with the programme of increasing the area under jute crop.

3. You know the high stakes involved in the increased cultivation of jute and realising that I hope you will reconsider your policy in regard to the two matters I have mentioned above.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. B. C. Roy
Chief Minister of
West Bengal
Calcutta

123

New Delhi
1 April 1950

My dear Sardar,

I enclose a copy of a letter I have written to [G. D.] Birla¹ which will interest you.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
John Matthai

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

New Delhi
1 April 1950

My dear Mr. Birla,

You will be interested to read the following extract from a letter I have received from a well-known Englishman in London regarding the budget:

"I have just returned from lunching with [Jeremy] Raisman and he showed me a copy of the *Eastern Economist* in which the comments on your speech seem to be particularly severe. We were both surprised at this, especially in view of what your budget has done for the business community, and wonder why this particular line is taken. We were very

interested in the comments on your income-tax estimates, as the representatives of the business community had always urged that a reduction in tax on business would in fact stimulate activities and in the end increase the net yield! Now that you have assumed that this may be so in your budget, they criticise you for doing it!"

Frankly, the erratic and superficial comments of this journal have been a demoralising influence on economic thinking in this country and have, incidentally, done a great deal of harm to India's interests abroad.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
John Matthai

Shri G. D. Birla
Birla House
New Delhi

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New Delhi
3 April 1950

My dear Dr. Matthai,

Thank you for letter dated 1 April 1950.

Before the receipt of your letter, Shankar had already noticed this and spoken to Ghanshyamdasji [G. D. Birla] who promised to look into it. After receiving your letter, I have spoken to Ghanshyamdasji, and he has given a hint to the Editor of The Eastern Economist to adopt a more balanced view of things. In any case, I am convinced—and I am sure you are also—that, so far as Ghanshyamdasji is concerned and men for whom he can speak are concerned, you have their support in full measure. It does distress me to find that our people here or outside have not yet appreciated the virtue of silence and do not try to cultivate it. But I suppose this is one of the many lessons of democracy which we, as a nation, have yet to learn, but on that account we need not be deterred from, or discouraged in, doing our duty.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. John Matthai
Finance Minister
New Delhi

New Delhi
1 April 1950

My dear Dr. Matthai,

I have just now seen the note from the Labour Ministry on the question of the Fair Wages Bill. It seems to me a very complicated measure, the administration of which would require a sufficiently trained and skilled staff with almost a judicial balance of mind and outlook. The machinery proposed is so elaborate that I think we would be hard put to find the necessary staff for the administration of this Bill. I am also convinced that the implementation of this measure would introduce a further complication in the smooth running of the various industries and the relations between labour and employers. In other words, it would instead of being a help be a further spoke in the wheel. I think the Labour Ministry have a sufficiently large number of labour welfare legislation to its credit and can easily afford to slow down. I would personally suggest, therefore, the postponement of this measure until better days. The mere fact that there is all-round agreement, even if it be so in this case, would not justify our taking the risk of introducing this measure without adequate and sufficiently efficient administrative machinery to implement it. I hope, therefore, that when the measure comes before the Economic Committee of the Cabinet, it will be possible for you and your other colleagues to accept this course.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. John Matthai
Minister for Finance
New Delhi

New Delhi
29 July 1950

Revered Sardarji,

I enclose for your information a brief note on the discussions we had with certain prominent industrialists, viz.,

J. R. D. Tata

G. D. Birla

Morarji J. Vaidya

Kasturbhai Lalbhai

S. L. Kirloskar

V. Seshasayee

Chandulal Parikh

Ambalal Sarabhai

K. D. Jalan

Deshmukh and Jagjivan Ram and the Members of the Planning Commission were present. No attempt was made to arrive at definite conclusions, but there was a very free and frank exchange of views. The most important suggestion which emerged was the appointment of a high-powered committee or committees which could be in direct touch with Government. I am attracted by the suggestion, which is being examined in detail. I hope to send my proposals to the Cabinet shortly.

Yours sincerely,
H. Mahtab

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

New Delhi
31 July 1950

My dear Mahtab,

Thank you for your letter dated 29 July 1950.

I am glad to know that your meeting with the prominent industrialists bore fruitful results. I agree with you that the high *powered committee or committees should be appointed*. There is a feeling amongst industrialists, and, as far as I can see, it is based on good foundation, that the Government is not giving them a fair deal, that they are suspected and that their co-operation is neither wanted nor sought. The appointment of the committee will change the psychology. But before you finalise this, please speak to me again, particularly about the composition of the committee.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri Harekrushna Mahtab
Minister for Industry & Supply
New Delhi

New Delhi
18 August 1950

My dear Mahtab,

I have seen the notes recorded on the file placed below.

I am afraid I do not agree with the approach which has been made to the question of the *high-level committees*. I do not think we need multiplication of committees. What we want is to ensure that the committees which already exist in respect of each industry do meet frequently and perform some real and useful purpose. I do not know what these committees have done, but you must insist on both efficiency and despatch and review their work from time to time. I do not know whether their meeting once in three months is sufficient. I would personally

prefer their meeting oftener, if they have to review the periodical progress of production in the industries concerned.

As regards the high-level committee, to which a reference was made at the last conference, I would like it to deal with general questions of policy and also important questions affecting various industries. It should be a small businesslike committee of, say, six or seven persons who could be depended upon to give sound and helpful advice. Either on this committee or on the other committees which are at present functioning, we should not have obstructionists or defeatists; they never help where help is needed and are always ready with destructive criticism. Such men are of no use at all. Nor should the committee be unwieldy, for then very often there is confusion and uncertainty of ideas. This committee of six or seven persons should meet once a month or two, or oftener, if necessary, in order to place its advice at our disposal on questions of policy of the type to which I have referred. I would particularly enlist its support in increased production. One depressing fact emerging from the plethora of proposals which we are receiving from various Ministries on the eve of the Chief Ministers' conference is that the essential problem of increasing production is being lost sight of in the forest of other proposals and problems. Some people seem to have got so enamoured of the idea of control and more control that they forget that we have to work with a depleted administrative machinery which has already been found inadequate for dealing with controls that exist. To heap upon this machinery more controls is inviting disaster. Instead of this, if we put more emphasis on increasing production and showed interest in removing obstacles in the way of production, we would be able to get better results even in regard to the control of prices.

On the question of encouragement of indigenous industries and a drive for Swadeshi as well as on the question of increasing production of these goods and making ourselves as self-sufficient as possible in the event of an emergency overtaking us, I wrote to you two letters from Dehra Dun. You said you were considering them, but I have not yet seen any proposals. I do not know what is being done, but I would ask you to do what you can with speed. Otherwise, we might be too late.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri Harekrushna Mahtab
New Delhi

New Delhi
22 August 1950

My dear Mahtab,

I have received the attached copy of a representation which has been made to you. It appears that your Ministry has been making departures from the agreement which was reached in September 1949 at a meeting which Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee called in Bombay. I was closely associated with the discussions at that meeting. Not only did Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee keep me in constant touch with what was going on and followed my advice, but with Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee's consent, I deputed Shankar to be present at the meeting in order to help Dr. S. P. Mookerjee. In regard to the September agreement, therefore, I can claim to have taken a part which at least entitled me to the courtesy of being informed of any changes in those arrangements; on the other hand, without even consulting me and unilaterally, changes have been made by Government. It is this sort of procedure that makes non-officials doubt the bona fides of Government and lose confidence in their word. If Government were up against any difficulties, the best course would have been to call a similar meeting, point out the difficulties and come to a general agreement as far as possible. Moreover, any piecemeal departures from arrangements of this type seriously affect the success of the whole policy and, as far as I have been able to judge, create bitterness which militates against helpful and effective co-operation.

I would be grateful if you would kindly review the arrangements reached in the September meeting and the changes which have been made in those arrangements since then from time to time, and consider whether those modifications are really necessary, and if they are, whether it would not be desirable to call a similar meeting, put forth our difficulties and then secure an agreed arrangement.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri Harekrushna Mahtab
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

LETTER DATED 11 AUGUST 1950 FROM SHRI A. S. THAKORE, SECRETARY,
JOINT MANAGING COMMITTEE, MASKATI CLOTH MARKET
ASSOCIATION AND PANCHKUVA CLOTH MERCHANTS'
ASSOCIATION, AHMEDABAD, TO SHRI H. K. MAHTAB,
MINISTER FOR INDUSTRY AND SUPPLY,
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, NEW DELHI

Subject: Textile Control Order . . .

Absorption therein on the normal trade channel of manufacturing centres.

After the latest orders of the Government of India with regard to one-third production were announced on 31 July 1950., Shri Chandulal P. Parekh, President, Ahmedabad Millowners Association, had discussed with and suggested to the Textile Commissioner, Shri T. P. Barat, a scheme to absorb the normal trade channel of the manufacturing centres in the controlled distribution of cloth as its supply being further curtailed under the latest orders, it is faced with devastating unemployment in its ranks. I was invited by Shri T. P. Barat to discuss the said scheme on 8 August 1950 at Bombay. After returning back to Ahmedabad, I reported to the Joint Managing Committee of the Maskati Cloth Market Association and the Panchkuva Cloth Merchants Association the subject matter of my discussion with the Textile Commissioner. After careful consideration of the matter reported by me, the Joint Managing Committee of the two associations has directed me to make a representation to you as under:

(1) After the reimposition of the Textile Control in August 1948, which was ill-timed and against the well-considered advice both of the industry and trade, Government was faced with the problem of clearing large-scale accumulations both with the mills and the provinces, in less than 12 months' time because the Government had rejected the willing co-operation offered by the trade and had completely eliminated the trade channels of the manufacturing centres. The whole textile policy was, therefore, reviewed and reconsidered both by the Textile Advisory Committee and by the then Minister, Dr. S. P. Mookerjee, in September 1949 at Bombay and the Government of India had, thereafter, announced their policy of gradual decontrol. As the first step towards that policy, Government had permitted the mills to sell one-third production to the normal trade channels. Even this concession was not quite sufficient for the existing number of dealers but it did serve them as a succour against complete unemployment. The latest orders of the Government

which considerably curtail this concession has come as a great blow to the trade channels of the manufacturing centres as they are faced with devastating unemployment both in their own ranks as well as in their employees.

(2) It is our considered opinion that the latest orders of Government are nothing but another patch-work intended to mend the utter confusion prevailing in the execution of the Textile Control Order and they will not serve any useful purpose as they are not the correct remedy. We, once again, beg to reiterate our considered opinion that decontrol is the only correct remedy to increase production and to balance our supply and demand of cotton textiles.

(3) However, if Government is determined to pursue its ill-advised policy of continuing the textile control, we beg to submit to Government to revise their present system of cloth distribution with a view to absorb the entire trade channel of the manufacturing centres as it is the most hard hit under the present system. The supply of one-third production, as further reduced under the latest orders, will hardly provide a bare maintenance to a small fraction of the present channel of the manufacturing centres and they are completely eliminated so far as the controlled distribution of the two-thirds production is concerned. This will lead to large-scale unemployment amongst the dealers and their employees of the manufacturing centres. It is, therefore, urgently necessary for Government to review and revise their present system of distribution of cloth. We beg to submit the following suggestions for Government's serious and sympathetic consideration and adoption:

- (a) As was done during the period 1945 to 1948 of the previous textile control, Government should devise some scheme to determine the reasonable quota from the mills of each dealer holding a valid licence in the manufacturing centres. Government should also fix some convenient and suitable period as the basic period for determining the quota of each dealer.
- (b) Government should fix the margin of profit of such quota-holders of the manufacturing centres at not less than 2 per cent above the ex-mill or ex-factory price which should be accommodated within 14 p.c. margin.
- (c) If Government find it difficult to accommodate and include the above margin of 2 per cent within the present 14 per cent margin between the ex-mill and retail price of cloth, we earnestly request Government to increase the 14 p.c. margin to 16 p.c. with the special purpose of accommodating and absorbing thousands of dealers of the manufacturing centres in the fold of controlled distribution, and thus save them and their employees from the ruinous effects of complete unemployment.

4. In the end, we once again earnestly request the Government of India to review and revise their policy with regard to textile control and also to

review and revise the present system of cloth distribution after giving their careful and sympathetic consideration to the constructive suggestions made above, which, if accepted by Government, will serve the useful double purpose of effective wiping out of the malpractices at all stages and at the same time providing a maintenance for thousands of dealers and their employees in the manufacturing centres.

Copy to: Textile Commissioner, Government of India, Bombay, for information.

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New Delhi

2 September 1950

Respected Sardarji,

I am in receipt of your letter dated 22 August 1950. No vital changes in the decisions arrived at in September last appear to have been made as I shall point out in the succeeding paragraphs of this letter, even though with the shortage of cotton and our export drive which commenced after the meeting held in September 1949 there has been a radical change in the textile situation.

2. I should like to deal first with the point about which there has been much misrepresentation. It is sought to be made out that the concession afforded to mills in September 1949 to sell one-third of their production of cloth in free sale has been withdrawn. This is inaccurate. Mills are still at liberty to sell one-third of their production in free sale. All that we have done is to impose a limit that can go out both by exports and by free sales, in order to ensure continuity of supplies through controlled channels to State Governments. In future, all exports made by mills will be offset against the one-third free sale quota. There is, however, no limit on the amount of cloth which a mill may export; in fact, it has the right to export its total production if it can and so desires.

It is essential, however, to understand the circumstances in which the one-thirds free sale concession was afforded to the mills. It was given strictly on the understanding

(a) that two-thirds of the mills' total production would be ensured to the States;

(b) having assured State Governments of the two-thirds quota, mills were given the permission to market one-third of their production through free sale channels.

It was imperative in this arrangement that the States should continue to receive two-thirds of their quota through the controlled channels. This has, however, not been the case, and the States have in this procedure been penalised by receiving much less than their due share through the controlled channels. During the period September 1949 to June 1950, the total despatches to States from producing centres were 1,226,793½ bales. Of this total quantity, 735,443 bales were sold in free sale and 491,350½ bales through controlled channels. Normally, the ratio of 2/3: 1/3 of cloth supplies through controlled channels as against supplies through free sale channels should have been maintained. In this case, however, the situation has been reversed. The complaints of State Governments that they were receiving less than their due share are justified.

If we allow mills to export cloth on an unrestricted scale and also to sell one-third of their production in free sale, the State Governments will not receive the quota of two-thirds of the mills' production assured to them under the September 1949 agreement.

The essential point is to strike a harmonious balance between our exports and our internal supplies. At the same time, the interests of the consumer, which are paramount, must not be neglected. We have endeavoured as best as we can to protect the interests of the consumer while allowing the industry the maximum of free play within the orbit of the controls. The one-third free sale has been allowed to continue. We have not reduced our ceiling in exports by a yard; at the same time, we have taken steps to ensure that the consumer obtains his due share of the two-thirds production through controlled channels.

3. I feel that since certain misleading issues have been raised, the full facts should be brought to your notice. The record of the mills in selling cloth in free sale is unenviable. Complaints have been coming in from all quarters that they have been charging premia on the cloth that they sell in free sale. I indicate below for your information the premia which have been charged by mills:

		SF	F	M	C
(1) Dhoties	A	10 to 15%	10%	25 to 30% *	
	B	7 to 7½%	5 to 7%	20 to 25%	
	C	2%	Ex	10 to 15%	

* Grey in SF and Fine 5% more

		SF	F	M	C
(2) Sarees	A	5 to 7%	10 to 15%	30 to 35%	
	B	EX	5 to 10%	20 to 25%	
	C	EX	2 to 5%	10 to 15%	
(3) Mulls	A	15 to 20%	15 to 20%	—	
	B	10 to 15%	10 to 15%	—	
(4) Voiles	A	15% Dyed and Bleached			
	B	8 to 10% Ptd.			
(5) Dorias		Not easily available in the market at any margin.			
(6) Long cloth Bld.	A		20 to 25%	25 to 30%	
	B		15 to 20%	20 to 25%	
	C		10 to 15%	15 to 20%	
(7) Long cloth Grey (sheeting included)	A			35 to 40%	
	B			25 to 30%	**
	C			20 to 25%	
(8) Shirting	A	25 to 30%	Mer	30 to 35%	
	B	15 to 20%		20 to 30%	
	C	10 to 15%		15 to 20%	
(9) Printed Chintz	A	10 to 15%		20 to 25%	
	B	8 to 10%		15 to 20%	
	C	5 to 7%			
(10) Poplins	A	10%		10%	
	B	5 to 7%			
(11) Coating	A			30 to 35%	
	B			20 to 30%	
	C			15 to 20%	
(12) Bed Ticking	A			35 to 40%	
	B			25 to 30%	
	C			20 to 25%	
(13) Kaccha Mulls			60 to 90%		
(14) Drill	A		45 to 50%	Grey Min.	
	B		35 to 40%	Khaki	80%
	C		25 to 30%		

The figures above indicate that the premia for superfine cloth in the case of popular varieties such as dhoties and sarees, mulls and voiles range between 5% and 15%. In the case of fine varieties, the premia are as high as 25% to 30%. The same is true in

the case of shirtings of A class mills, the premia ranging between 5% and 25%. Long cloth, which is greatly in demand by the middle classes, is selling in the case of A class mills at a premium of 20 to 25%. Kaccha mulls are fetching extravagant premia of 60 to 90%. The best quality drills too are fetching fancy premia ranging between 45 and 50%.

4. The figures I have cited above reflect no credit on the integrity of the industry as a whole. It is for this reason that the State Governments are insistent that as much cloth as possible should pass through controlled channels, as the free sale cloth by being sold at illegal margins above the controlled prices has its effects on the cloth which passes through controlled channels and tends to disrupt market prices.

5. In respect of exports of yarn, the position had become very critical and State Governments were complaining of inadequacy of yarn for their handloom weavers. The pressure from State Governments in this matter was so great that there was no alternative but to withdraw the free sale concession afforded to mills in respect of yarn. We have received telegrams from the Bombay and Madras Governments recommending that yarn exports should be banned forthwith. I think I can do no better than quote the telegram which Dinkarrao Desai sent me on 24-8-50:

'YARN POSITION IN THIS STATE GETTING ALARMINGLY SERIOUS. ACUTE DISCONTENT PREVAILING AMONG WEAVERS IN ALL PARTS OF STATE OWING TO SCARCITY OF YARN. AGAINST SANCTIONED QUOTA OF 11,000 BALES LESS THAN 3,000 BALES RECEIVED MONTHLY SINCE JANUARY. URGE IMMEDIATE AND COMPLETE EMBARGO ON ALL EXPORTS OF YARN.'

This telegram may be said to typify the views of State Government who not only endorse our decision to discontinue the one-third free sale of yarn by mills but urge that all exports of yarn from the country should be banned forthwith in the interests of the handloom weavers whose position at the moment is precarious. It is therefore obvious that when supplies through controlled channels have been reduced to a mere trickle as against the assurances given to States that they would receive two-thirds of the total production of mills through controlled channels, it was considered necessary to adopt measures which have been taken.

Yours sincerely,
H. K. Mahtab

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

New Delhi
4 September 1950

My dear Mahtab,

Please refer to your letter dated 2 September 1950 regarding textile policy.

2. As would be clear from my letter of 22 August, it was not my intention to suggest that no change should be made in the September decisions. My emphasis was that the arrangements having been settled after mutual consultation between the Government and the representatives of the textile industry, any changes should have been made after consultation with them. Otherwise there are always charges of vacillation, breach of faith and decisions without consultation. I do not say that the changes were necessary or unnecessary, but even if they were considered necessary the fact of the necessity could have been explained to the interests concerned. I am sure you will agree with me that in so far as we can take the interests concerned with us in the implementation of our policy, it is all to our advantage and our difficulties are to that extent very much less.

3. I do not have the September agreement with me. But as far as I can recollect, at that time there was a definite ceiling on exports and it was over and above that ceiling that one-third free sale quota was fixed. If this is not correct and one-third free sale quota was to include exports, there has been no change and I do not think that the industry can make any grievance of it.

4. It is true that the September arrangement was contingent on the understanding that the States will get two-thirds of the mills' total production and one-third of the production would be for free sale. You have given me some figures, but I do not know how far the failure of the States to obtain one-third of the mills' total production was due to the inability of the States themselves to lift the quantity within the prescribed time. As far as I remember, the arrangement was that after the prescribed time, the mills would be free to sell it to others. If, therefore, on account of this failure the States could not obtain the allotted production, they have themselves to blame. If the mills have failed to give that allotted production within the prescribed time, the

mills should have been brought to book. You will recall that all this arrangement was devised with a view to preventing stocks from accumulating in the mills. The States cannot complain, therefore, if they have failed to secure the supplies in implementation of this policy.

5. As regards complaints of black-marketing etc., I take it that the complaints are not of any general occurrence. My own information is that some mills have misbehaved. It would be wrong, however, to punish the industry as a whole for the failure of some mills to discharge their obligations. I shall always be in favour of taking such mills to task and we should go the whole hog in dealing with them. But we should not punish innocent or honest mills for the delinquencies of bad mills. I do not know if we have evidence sufficient to enable us to deal with the delinquent mills. If we have, I suggest that we deal drastically with them and ask the industry also to take corporate action against them in so far as that may be possible under the rules of their Association.

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri H. K. Mahtab
New Delhi

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New Delhi
3 August 1950

Revered Sardarji,

The other day you referred to Jaipuria's¹ case in Kanpur. The turn the case has taken gives an impression that the local officers, for some reason or other, have been over-zealous in this matter. After the preliminary investigation of the Enforcement Branch, the local police have taken up the case and the whole matter has now gone to the court. In the meanwhile I went into the papers myself. I promised to send you a note on the subject. The arrest of the directors and declaration of the proprietor of the mill as an absconder by the District Magistrate have created a sensation in the circle of industrialists. The facts of refusing bail and declaring a millowner as an absconder tend to show that the local officers are over-zealous in this prosecution.

¹ Seth Muntu Ram Jaipuria: Millowner, Merchant, Financier of Kanpur; member, Rajya Sabha

Shri Sri Prakasa also wrote to me about this some days back. I would seek your advice in this matter. I send herewith two notes—one over the signature of Mr. Barat (which has been written after full discussion with Mr. Kaul, the Deputy Secretary, and Mr. Venkatraman, the Secretary), and the other, the legal opinion given by the Government Council, Kanpur. I do not know if we can direct the withdrawal of the case at this stage. If you require to go through the whole file, I shall send it to you for your study. The case has become so complicated that I seek your advice as to what to do in this matter.

Yours sincerely,
H. K. Mahtab

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

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New Delhi
4 August 1950

My dear Mahtab,

Thank you for your D.O. dated 3 August 1950 regarding Jaipuria's case in Kanpur.

Having regard to the facts mentioned in Barat's note and the stage which the case has reached, I do not think it would be possible to have the case withdrawn, particularly since the case involves cheating. But I agree with you that there is evidence of over-zealousness on the part of local officers. In so far as this involves the use of judicial discretion and functioning of judicial officers, we cannot do anything; but in so far as executive officers are concerned, I think you should bring the facts to the notice of the UP Government in so far as their own officers are concerned, so that they can deal with them if they are to blame. I do not think we should allow such high-handed action to go unnoticed.

It seems that in this case action has been taken under the Vicarious Responsibility Clause. I do not like this clause myself and have made no secret of my views. During the war, as far as I remember, there was hardly any case of this nature, but now that the powers exist, there seems to be a tendency to make use of them somewhat indiscriminately. We issued instructions

some time ago that, in cases of vicarious responsibility, a decision to prosecute directors, etc., should be taken at the highest level possible. This does not seem to have been done in this case. If so, I think you should take the defaulting officers to task for their omission to comply with our instructions.

I am returning the papers enclosed with your letter.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri Harekrushna Mahtab
Minister for Industry & Supply
New Delhi

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New Delhi
21 August 1950

My dear Mahtab,

On 4 August 1950, I wrote to you about Jaipuria's case in Kanpur.

As you will see from that letter, it was based on the assumption that what was done was something more than mere technical breach of the Order and involved cheating. Information has come to my notice which appears to indicate that the element of cheating is completely lacking, and, even in regard to the technical breach, the breach happened in full knowledge of the textile control machinery. It appears that shortly after an application was made for approval of higher prices, the Deputy Director of Production, Kanpur, gave the mills to understand that the sanction of the Textile Commissioner would be a mere formality. It is true that this is denied by the Deputy Director, but that denial has come more than three months after the fact was first communicated and four weeks after it was repeated in another communication. I think the lack of promptitude on the part of the Deputy Director indicates that the benefit of the doubt, if any, must go to the mills. Secondly, it seems that continuously statements were submitted to the Textile Commissioner which clearly indicated that the prices were being charged for Pakistan cotton. The Textile Commissioner apparently raised no difficulty. Thirdly, the counts, in respect of which the prices were increased, related to Group VI and not to Group VII, as was wrongly mentioned in the reference made to the Textile Commissioner and the replies thereto. Even Form 'C' statements were

furnished to the Textile Commissioner towards the end of April, that is some months before the case was started. If there was any false representation, that should have been cured by the submission of Form 'C'. On the whole, it seems to me from the information given that there was no case for cheating, although there was certainly a breach of the Textile Control Order, in that higher prices were marked and the articles delivered without the approval of the Textile Commissioner and the mills failed to submit Form 'C'. I think, in the light of the circumstances mentioned, the case might have to be re-examined. I have, therefore, asked that a representation should be made to you giving out all the facts, so that you might be able to judge the whole thing independently.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri Harekrushna Mahtab
New Delhi

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New Delhi
26 September 1950

Revered Sardarji,

I was very deeply grieved to learn from Shri Menon that you are sorry that I do not reply to your letters in time and that about as many as seven matters referred to me by you, are still pending with me. On receiving this information, I made a thorough examination of my office, and I find immediate action has been taken on whatever you have referred to me.

With regard to investigation into our needs and the capacity of the industries in the event of a war, as soon as I received your letter I immediately asked my Ministry to start investigation, and they are doing it. I also wrote to the Prime Minister to call upon the Planning Commission to take the investigation which, I understand, they are doing. Besides, I requested Dr. Bhatnagar to help our Ministry in this connection. He has given an elaborate note with regard to our needs and possibilities. All these are now being examined and steps are being taken.

With regard to the textile policy, you wrote to me first that without consulting the industry some changes had been made in the September decisions. In reply I explained to you in what circumstances the changes had been made. Then you suggested that

whenever any change was considered necessary, the industry should be consulted. I have accepted this suggestion.

With regard to Jaipuria's case, in your letter you wrote to me that Shri Jaipuria was filing a representation, which he has done. That representation has been examined by my Ministry and has been sent to the Law Ministry for their opinion. Reference to the Law Ministry was necessary because the representation was based upon some factual as well as legal issues.

With regard to the high-power committee which has been decided to be set up, I am very sorry the matter has been delayed because of consultation with the Finance Ministry and the Planning Commission. It is going to be finalised by the first week of October at the latest.

From the above you will see that no matter which you have directed me to attend to is pending without any action being taken. Your suggestion is virtually an order to me and I do not understand why you should feel that due attention is not being paid to what you refer. I realise the delay which is taking place in these matters, but for this, reform in the Secretariat is necessary, and I have taken it up in right earnest now.

Yours sincerely,
H. K. Mahtab

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

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New Delhi
28 September 1950

My dear Mahtab,

Thank you for your letter dated 26 September 1950.

2. I am sorry that the information communicated to you by Menon should have upset you so much. I myself was wondering why all these matters were held up and you had not yet written to me about the progress for such a long time. One thing which has been clogging our efforts, particularly in the industrial field where time is of the essence, is the enormous delay that takes place in the disposal of business. Your experience of the matters which I had referred to you confirms me in this. Unless you take personal interest and keep under watch all these various

things, we shall never get them through. The matter regarding investigation into our needs and capacity of the industries in the event of a war is an instance in the point. We have taken three months over it. What would have happened if a war had overtaken us? What would happen if suddenly we are in it?

3. I note the action taken in regard to the textile policy and Jaipuria's case as well as the high-power committee. I hope it will be possible for you to finalise the latter two matters quickly.

4. There are two other matters on which I do not know what is happening. One is about the employment of Professor Messerschmitt about which I wrote to you on 7 July and you replied to me in your letter dated 9 July 1950. The other is about the Cotton Textile Research Fund about which I wrote to you in my letter dated 9 July 1950.

5. As I wrote to you when you joined, my help and advice are always available to you whenever you feel the need for the same. As I also told you the other day, we all had high hopes about your ability to get things done. The energy and expedition with which you tackled the question of cotton policy raised those hopes still further, but the slowness of the pace since then in regard to various matters which were the subject of correspondence and discussion between you and me made me feel uneasy and I was wondering whether this was, in any way, due to any lack of interest or to your preoccupations with extra-departmental matters. I do not look upon you as a mere colleague but also as one whose future is a matter of intense interest to me as it is full of promise. I am sure, therefore, that you will not misunderstand the interest which I might exhibit in the execution of various measures concerning your Ministry or the evolution of policy. My anxiety to see that things were done in all these matters quickly was due to no other cause except the earnest desire that you should make a thumping success of your job and build up your future on that success.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri Harekrushna Mahtab
New Delhi

New Delhi
8 October 1950

Revered Sardarji,

I am sorry I could not meet you after my return. I am now going on a tour to Orissa because I have not been there since I came here.

The Industrial Committee which I proposed to be set up was placed before the Economic Committee yesterday for consideration. The Economic Committee did not approve of it. They suggested that the Standing Committee of the Industrial Advisory Council which was existing should be revived. Political considerations weighed with them. Most of them thought that the appointment of a committee of industrialists would prejudice the people in general against Government. I do not believe in this, but even then it was the decision of the Economic Committee. I am thinking of calling a meeting of the Standing Committee and giving them some definite powers and functions on the 25th and 26th of this month. I shall discuss this with you when I come back on the 15th.

As regards Lala Sbanker Lal's case, it is now under consideration and I am trying my utmost to help him as far as possible.

Yours sincerely,
H. Mahtab

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

New Delhi
17 August 1950

My dear Mahtab,

Regarding the Vizagapatam shipbuilding yard, I am sending herewith a copy of the letter which I have written to Deshmukh.

I would be glad if you would take up this matter with Deshmukh as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri Harekrushna Mahtab
Minister for Industry & Supply
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

New Delhi
17 August 1950

My dear Deshmukh,

Dandekar,¹ when he came here the other day, mentioned to me the question of the Vizagapatam shipbuilding yard and told me that he was going to see you. I hope he has seen you and acquainted you with the present position.

2. As you probably know, it has a long history. At different times, we have considered this case and the various alternatives, but at no time have we minimised its importance in the industrial programme of the country. Finance has been our main obstacle. But the question there, if I may say so, is whether we should undo this great enterprise of the Scindias and prevent it from serving a national purpose because of this difficulty, or whether we should somehow find some money for it and utilise it for productive purposes now and in future. I have definite and strong views on this and have all along felt that we should not allow the labour, enterprise and capital of years to go waste or fall into disuse. I have no doubt myself that from the national point of view the yard is a necessity.

3. I would be grateful if you would go into this question sympathetically as early as possible in consultation with Mahtab and have the matter finalised before you go abroad.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri C. D. Deshmukh
Minister for Finance
New Delhi

¹Narayan Dandekar: ICS Commissioner of Income-Tax, 1941-46; on special duty with the Central Board of Revenue, 1946-47; Commissioner of Income-Tax, Bengal, 1947-48; member, Expert Committee to enquire into Finance of Indian States; associated with Scindia Steam Navigation Company Ltd., Bombay, 1949-54; Chairman, Associated Cement; member, Lok Sabha 1967-70

CHAPTER VII
CONGRESS PRESIDENCYSHIP

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New Delhi
8 August 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have today written a letter to Purushottam Das Tandon,¹ a copy of which I enclose.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

New Delhi
8 August 1950

My dear Tandon,

For some time past I have been greatly troubled about the Congress presidency. Naturally we discussed it here amongst some of us. I have a dislike for getting entangled in any elections, and normally my only interest would have been that a strong and effective President should be chosen. The Congress is in a bad way and, unless some steps to rejuvenate it are taken, is likely to fade away. As it is, it seems to have lost such inner strength that it possessed and we are concerned chiefly with faction fights and manoeuvring for position and place. It is sad to see this great organisation function in this petty way.

The problem that troubled me, however, was somewhat different. You were one of the candidates for the presidency and there were some other old colleagues. Most of these are friends of old standing, you the oldest of them. I need not tell you of my affection for you and my high regard for your integrity. Nevertheless, I have been troubled and distressed in mind. It

¹ Leading Congressman of Allahabad; Speaker of UP Assembly, 1937-39; member of Constituent Assembly; elected Congress President in 1950

has been our misfortune during the past two or three years or so to have drifted apart to some extent. I am referring not to our infrequent meetings but rather to the way our minds had been functioning. Probably you think that much that I say or do is wrong. For my part, I have often read your speeches with surprise and distress and have felt that you were encouraging the very forces in India, which, I think, are harmful.

We have many major problems in India, but I feel more and more that perhaps the most important of them is how to hold fast to certain basic ideals of the Congress as it used to be. One of these, which is of supreme importance today, is to fight against communalism. I see this communal spirit growing and spreading in India, together with something that I would call revivalism. I know all that has happened in Pakistan and that this is the reaction to it in India. But that is partly an explanation; it does not help. It has brought out all the intolerance, pettiness and narrow-mindedness in our people and I fear that India can never progress if we think and function in this way.

Your presiding over the refugees conference recently held in Delhi also distressed me because that refugee conference gave expression to views which struck me as excessively intolerant, communal and impractical. We are all interested in helping and rehabilitating the refugees and it may be that we have not done as much as we should have done. But that should not lead us into wrong directions. I think the major issue in this country today, if it is to progress and to remain united, is to solve satisfactorily our own minority problems. Instead of that, we become more intolerant towards our minorities and give as our excuse that Pakistan behaves badly. What happens to Pakistan is not my primary concern. But I am most intimately concerned with what happens to India, and this progressive decline in some of the basic things of life is distressing.

Unfortunately, you have become to large numbers of people in India some kind of a symbol of this communal and revivalist outlook and the question rises in my mind: Is the Congress going that way also? If so, where do I come into the picture, whether it is the Congress or whether it is the Government run by the Congress? Thus this larger question becomes related to my own activities.

I would have gladly welcomed your election to the Congress presidentship. But when I look at this matter impersonally and from the larger point of view I feel that this election would mean great encouragement to certain forces in India which I consider harmful. Hence my difficulty and my distress.

Another aspect of this question has been before my mind. Am I to remain silent over all this or should I express my opinion in some way? My first impulse was to remain silent, but the more I have thought of it the more it has appeared to me that this course of action is not fair to the

country or to me or others concerned. We cannot build up our public life in this way and if, later, I have to express my opinion, would not people say that I had no business to remain quiet at an earlier stage? I feel therefore that I should express my opinion in some form or other before the Congress election takes place.

Some people, without my knowledge, had put forward my name for the presidency. I was quite convinced that it would be improper for me to accept this great honour and responsibility so long as I remain Prime Minister. That would have been a gesture only with no real meaning.

I am writing to you today because I feel I owe it to you to tell you how I feel. In spite of such differences as may creep into our political or other approaches to our major problems, nothing, I hope, will affect our friendship and affection for each other.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Shri Purushottam Das Tandon
President, Provincial Congress Committee
Lucknow

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Councillor's Residence
Lucknow
12 August 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

I have your letter of the 8th instant. I have read parts of it with sorrow and also with surprise.

I agree that the Congress is in a bad way and that steps have to be taken to prevent its utter collapse. Our whole social life is going to pieces and the Congress is a sample of the grossly low ethical standard spreading all round. The soul of the country has to be saved. I wish you could take up this great work which is so much above the Prime Minister's routine task—highly important as it is.

You have referred to my nomination for the presidency of the Congress. It is not of my seeking. It is something like what happened in the last presidency election of our own province about which you have some knowledge. I tried my level best to dissuade friends, who were keen on my nomination, from bringing it about. But I had ultimately to bow to their wishes.

You have referred to some of my speeches about which you have read and to my presiding over the refugee conference. I ask

you to believe your eyes and ears more than newspaper or other reports. You seem to connect me with narrow communalism and what you call revivalism. While you and I have agreed on and worked together on many vital problems, there have been some matters on which you and I have not seen eye to eye—the adoption of Hindi as the national language and the partition of the country with its consequential issues being the chief among them. It is a failing even with great persons to take their own geese for swans, their own aptitudes for fundamental principles. But I ask you to look at the matter with some detachment. It is possible that others may be right and you may be wrong. In any case why should it be necessary to attribute narrowness to others who differ from you!

Obviously you have the Hindu-Muslim question in mind when you speak of communalism. You were present at the last political conference of our province when I spoke for about an hour and a half as president. I expressed then clearly my views on the Hindu-Muslim question in general and on the cultural relationship between the two communities in particular. I have never deviated from the views then expressed. I do not recognise any Islamic culture or any Hindu culture. I do not recognise that there is any book in the world which has said the last word on what man should be. Neither the Veda nor the Quran is the last word for me in human thought. Muslim divines take umbrage at my expressing this view and say I am anti-Muslim. I thought you at least would rise above that outlook. The old-world Pandits of Banaras also dislike my views and attack me freely in their organs—the daily Hindi Sanmarg is an exponent of their views. My leading thought in politics is an all round unity in the country as far as it can be achieved with unavoidable and necessary diversities being kept within proper limits. I have openly advocated Hindu-Muslim marriages and, as you know, caste orthodoxy has played little part in my life. I am, therefore, surprised at your connecting me with a communal outlook.

Revivalism is a confusing expression. It may mean renaissance and it may mean reactionarism. I would revive today some of the great spiritual standards that our country stood for in the past. I regard them as precious legacies. At the same time I reject strongly the irrational dogmas that surround both Hinduism and Islam in action—though such dogmas may be laid down by the religious books sacred to Hindus or Muslims. I hold that all religious precepts have to be weighed by the intellect and not one of them can be accepted merely on the authority of a book.

The question of refugees stands on a footing different from that of the Hindu-Muslim relationship. It is a human question. It has assumed intensity because of our national action in bringing about partition. To have sympathy for the cause of refugees is natural both for you and me. I feel that we must do much more for them than we have done hitherto and that, apart from Providence, you and I and the leaders of public opinion in our country are responsible for the miseries of the refugees. It was, therefore, in the ordinary course of public life that I accepted some months ago an invitation, pressed with earnestness by Dr. Chitram Gidwani¹ and Lala Achinram,² that I should preside over the proposed refugee conference. I am responsible for what I said. I suggested a capital levy which would bring in a few arabs (thousands of millions) of rupees, not crores, for the purposes of rehabilitation. This is perhaps a heroic remedy. But I feel that it is practical and deserves earnest and fearless examination. Thirty crores or so a year cannot solve this big problem.

It would not be fair to saddle me with all the opinions that were expressed in the conference. I can only say that the influence which I exercised as president was always towards restrain in thought and word. You might well enquire from some reasonable person who was present during the gatherings as to what the direction of my effort was. I could see that there were some men who wished to use the troubles of the refugees for discrediting the Congress and for political ends. It was obvious that they would harm the real cause of the refugees. But I believe I succeeded in thwarting their desire by invoking the good sense of the refugees at the public meetings and also by private persuasion. Here is a cutting of a Hindi newspaper. You have here a sample of what some extremists felt. This paper openly says that the refugees made a mistake in selecting me as their president. The reason of this displeasure, so far as I see, was that I was able to prevent rabid language and rowdiness.

You say that you feel that you have to express an opinion about the presidential election. That is a hint that you may have to say things unsavoury about me. I would be happy if my name is allowed to be dropped; if that is not done and if as a result of your statement my name is not accepted after a poll, I shall not

¹ Congress leader of Sind; President, Sind PCC before Independence; Chief spokesman of Sind in Congress organisation

² A Congress member of Lok Sabha from East Punjab; a leading member of the Servants of the People Society founded by Lala Lajpatrai

be very sorry. I assure you that with the bitterest language that you may employ against me you will not succeed in making me bitter or abate my personal affection for you. I have loved you all these years as a younger brother, though my feeling is unobtrusive. The younger brother may sometimes indulge in bitterness and even ill-will towards an elder one, but the latter rarely does so in respect of the object of his affection.

I do not like some of your opinions and administrative acts. I wish you could take a more balanced view in some matters and a sterner attitude in others, but that cannot affect my personal emotion towards you or those connected with you, for it is a part of my being.

The presidentship of the Congress or the prime ministership of the country are great and attractive positions but are, after all, small things in a proper valuation of our duties or of what contributes to our happiness. Looked at in a word perspective the country itself becomes a small affair. Even before our eyes the importance of individual countries is dwindling in the world drama. Perhaps with returning sense or what you may call revivalism of the old concepts, the world itself may appear to many as not the be-all and end-all of existence.

I have learnt to see things with a somewhat impersonal outlook. I try to adhere to truth as I conceive it. In expressing it I wish to avoid causing pain but I am conscious that my views sometimes create misunderstanding and I am not always able to remove them.

With love,
Yours,
Purushottam Das Tandon

The Hon'ble Shri Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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New Delhi
13 August 1950

Priya Purushottam,

I have just received your letter of 12 August. Thank you for it. I shall not at present discuss the various matters that you have mentioned in your letter, though some time or other I should like to talk to you about them or write.

You will have seen the statement I have issued about the congress presidential election. At no time did I intend mentioning your name in it. If by any chance I had mentioned it, surely it would not have been in any language except that of affection.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

Shri Purushottam Das Tandon
Councillor's Residence
Lucknow

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New Delhi
9 August 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for [your] letter of 8 August with which you have enclosed a copy of your letter to Tandonji.

I have already had one or two talks with you about the attitude which you have taken on this issue and you know my own approach to the attitude which you have expressed. The letter which you have written to Tandonji has distressed me deeply. Tandonji has been dear and near to you for the last 30 years. His position and standing in the Congress organisation of the province [Uttar Pradesh] has throughout been high and unique. In Congress affairs in the province he has always enjoyed your collaboration. That he commands deep and profound respect in his province, as well as outside in India, cannot be denied. I know that he has deep-seated affection for you. That affection expressed itself unreservedly when last January he presented you the Abhinandan Granth, in the compilation of which he had a major share. I know it for a fact that Tandonji has never tolerated any disparaging remarks about you uttered in his presence. That, in spite of all this, there is a gulf between you and him, and a gulf so wide as to come on the surface in such an open manner at a time when Tandonji can justly claim his reward for his long and distinguished services to the Congress, has filled me with grief.

You have referred in the letter to Tandonji's presiding over the refugee conference. I was told by Tandonji when he came here for the conference that he had accepted this commitment four months ago. I know it for a fact from all the information that I have been able to gather, both from official and non-official sources,

that Tandonji's presence in the refugee conference was a great restraining influence. He put down all utterances disparaging to you or the Congress with a strong hand. He even threatened to walk out and resign his presidentship if some of the extreme demands which were urged at the conference with substantial support were pressed. The refugees are undoubtedly bitter and disillusioned. We cannot ignore this fact. There is plenty of explosive material in them. We have always to bear this in mind. Extremism is bound to be popular among them. This should be a warning to us. If, in spite of all this, Tandonji succeeded by his presence in moderating the demands of the refugees, I feel that, howsoever we might dislike his presiding at the conference, it would only be fair to him to acknowledge this fact. The views which were expressed at the conference are the views which are held by a large number of them. None can stifle those views, nor can the responsibility for the expression of such views be nailed to any one particular man's doors. I am saying this only in order to put before you one aspect of Tandonji's presence at the conference, because in fairness to him I think you should be apprised of it.

I wonder if another aspect of what you have written to Tandonji has struck you. People might feel mystified that, in spite of your nearness to Tandonji and your affection for him, you did not try to bring him round by using your personal influence or by personally discussing his faults with him. Some might even find it strange that matters have come to a head only at the time of his candidature when the malady was deepseated and deeprooted.

I would, therefore, even now suggest that before you finally make up your mind you send for Tandonji and have a heart-to-heart talk with him. It is possible that as a result of this meeting Tandonji might be able to understand your attitude better and you might yourself be able to impress upon him how his attitude is detrimental or contrary to what you call "the basic or fundamental principles of the Congress". I myself feel that it would be contrary to the relationship which exists between you and him to dispose of this matter by correspondence.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister
New Delhi

New Delhi
9 August 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thank you for your letter of 9 August about Tandonji and my letter to him.

Much that you say I agree with entirely. I have known Tandonji not for 30 years but at least 50 years, since I was a small boy, and we have had and still have a great deal of affection for each other. We have often differed in public affairs and argued about them. But in view of our paramount objective and aim we pulled together. During the last three years, however, other questions have come to the forefront and our difference has grown. I have had a number of talks with him, though not recently, about various subjects. We know and understand each other thoroughly, and unfortunately we realise that we differ. Partly because of this, I gave up taking any part in UP Congress affairs. I have expressed myself very freely in the UP Provincial Congress Committee, in provincial conferences in the UP and in private workers' gatherings, often when Tandonji was present. He thinks I am wrong and I think that he is taking up a wrong attitude or rather pursuing a wrong policy. His general attitude at the time of the language debates in the Constituent Assembly distressed me greatly. We opposed each other quite frankly. It was not the language question but the whole approach that mattered.

I was not in India at the time of the last Congress election and took no part in it whatever. But long before the last election, when I was asked by one or two UP friends who were common friends of Tandonji and myself, I told them that much as I respected Tandonji it would be impossible for me to vote for him because of the policy he was pursuing. In most of his speeches he has condemned the policy of the Congress Government in many ways.

I have no doubt that Tandonji exercised a restraining influence on the refugee conference. Nevertheless, his presence and presidentship gave a certain importance and prestige to that conference and the decisions of that conference were wholly objectionable. Apart from the other decisions, they have threatened some kind of action after a certain period.

We are up against very difficult problems and the Congress mind is perplexed and is turning towards what I consider a totally wrong direction. That was evident enough in the two-day debate on the Bengal situation in Parliament. That debate turned largely on the refugee conference resolutions. I expressed myself strongly on these issues because I think this particular approach is fatal for India.

We can hardly allow personal considerations to come in the way of public policies. To me it appears that the most important thing today is to stop this inner rot in the Congress. If that goes on, there is no hope for the Congress and little for the country. There can be little doubt that in the public mind Tandonji is associated with this new turn being given to the Congress. Can we remain silent when something that we consider is very wrong is being done? The whole future of the Congress and the country is at stake.

I would very gladly at any time have a frank and friendly talk with Tandonji. I do not think there is any misunderstanding between him and me as regards any facts. It is about basic policies, and I know from fairly long experience that there is a difference on this issue. I can hardly expect him to change his fundamental outlook, as he is unlikely to change mine. Nevertheless, there is no difficulty whatever in our meeting or discussing matters. I met him the other day in Allahabad. I did not have a separate talk with him of a serious nature. We met with others and I addressed a gathering of workers there when he was present.

I feel that in this crisis in our national affairs we have to give a clear lead to the public. It is not fair for confusion to continue. Respective viewpoints should be put forward as concisely and clearly as possible so that the public mind may function and decide. I do not mind very much, in the ultimate analysis, what the public decides, even though I may not like it. But the public should appreciate the different viewpoints and realise the consequences of any decision it takes.

As I told you, I have to issue some kind of a statement in withdrawal of my candidature. In this statement I have to mention these important matters. I do not see how I can possibly ignore them.

I have drafted a statement which I am sending you.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

DRAFT STATEMENT

Some friends, without my knowledge or consent, have put forward my name for the presidentship of the next session of the Congress. Others, whose opinions I value, have pressed me to accept it. Previous to this it had not struck me as a possibility that I might be Congress President again. In view, however, of the complexity of the situation that exists today and the desire of some friends, I gave full thought to this matter. As a result, I am convinced that it would not be proper for me to stand for election so long as I am Prime Minister.

The Congress has somewhat different functions to perform now than in the old days when it was the embodiment of the struggle for the freedom of India. But even so it has great responsibilities to discharge and it is of the utmost consequence that it should retain its faith in its objectives and ideals and that its organisation should be disciplined and capable of undertaking effective work on a large scale. Therefore it is important that the President should be able to devote himself to this heavy and onerous work. I cannot possibly do so. While my time is all taken up in my work as Prime Minister, it would not be fair to the Congress or to me, for me to make a gesture and stand for the presidentship.

All of us whose lives have been intertwined with the Congress for a generation or more, are deeply attached to that great organisation and consider it a high privilege to serve it. All of us are distressed at the weakness that is coming into the Congress from many directions. I have personally, in common with many others, been greatly perturbed at the fading out from people's minds of many of the basic principles for which the Congress has all along stood. If this foundation goes, how long can the superstructure remain, and even if it remains who will profit by it? Therefore it seems to me of the utmost consequence that the old principles of the Congress should continue to guide us and should be clarified and emphasised again.

During the recent debate in Parliament on the Bengal situation I have ventured to lay stress on some of these principles for which the Congress has all along stood. I was surprised that even some Congressmen should have drifted away so far from them and put forward proposals which used to be completely alien to the Congress mind and which, indeed, the Congress had all along opposed in the past.

I hope the Nasik Congress will undertake the task of clarifying the Congress position and declaring afresh that the old ideals hold and the old

approach to political and other problems is still important. There is a sickness in the body and soul of the Congress which even a very large membership cannot heal. It requires an inner treatment and more basic cure.

Meanwhile, there is the question of the Congress presidency. I am not particularly interested in individuals, important as they are. Many of those who are standing for the presidency are old and tried comrades for whom I have affection and respect. But in the present crisis in Congress history principles are more important than individuals and I earnestly trust that it is on the basis of these old principles that our elections and our work will be approached.

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New Delhi
10 August 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Many thanks for your letter of the 9th.

2. I have seen your draft statement and have no comments as regards its contents. But I would like to make one more effort to persuade you to limit it only to the question of withdrawal of your candidature. It is good you have not expressed any open preference for one candidate or the other, but in view of the talks you have had informally with members of the Working Committee and other talks that are going on people are bound to interpret or to be told to interpret it against Tandonji. In the first place, I have already suggested that it would not be fair to condemn him without a hearing. Secondly, the proper time for testing him will come when at the Nasik session the old principles and ideals are restated. He is a conscientious man, and if he feels he is out of tune with those principles and ideals he will not hesitate to say so; but if he adheres to them he will have to abide by them and act accordingly. To say anything indirectly against him at this stage will thus not only be unfair to him and his long and distinguished Congress record but will also be, if I may say so, placing the cart before the horse.



AT PALAM AIRPORT, NEW DELHI, ON THE OCCASION OF NEHRU'S
DEPARTURE FOR KARACHI, APRIL 1950



ON HIS RETURN JOURNEY FROM A TOUR OF THE UNITED STATES OF TRAVANGORE AND COCHIN
IN MAY 1950 ON BOARD INS DELHI, SARDAR PATEL RELAXES WITH A GAME OF CARDS.
IN HIS EARLY DAYS HE WAS AN EXPERT BRIDGE PLAYER, WITH HIM IS MANIDEN

or not, personalities will come into play and will become the subject of talk and controversy. The ideals and principles will then fade into the background. We shall see party politics at their worst. Some of our own colleagues unfortunately are past masters in it. I earnestly feel we should avoid all this. I would, therefore, suggest with all earnestness at my command that you raise these issues at the Congress and not now. Otherwise, it is quite possible that the issues may get involved in personalities. To me it seems the best, the most appropriate and a clear democratic way of achieving the objective we have at heart.

4. I hope you will agree with me, and if you do I suggest that you issue only the first two paras of the draft.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister
New Delhi

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New Delhi
11 August 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thank you for your letter of 10 August.

I fully appreciate what you say. But I hope you will also appreciate my difficulty. I feel that I must give some indication about my own position. It would not be fair to the public and to my colleagues that I should spring a surprise upon them at a later stage. As I have told you, I may find it difficult to continue as a member of the Congress Working Committee or even of Government.

I have thus to balance these two aspects of the question. I tried to do so in the statement I drafted.

It is not my habit to take much interest in elections, or at any rate, to interfere in them. I have kept apart from electioneering, except on the mass scale when I have toured about in favour of Congress candidates. But is it fair on my part to remain quite silent when I feel strongly about a certain issue? There is no question of my condemning Tandonji with or without a hearing. We know each other sufficiently well to understand each other and to agree or disagree, as the case may be. To raise vital

issues after a decision on them is not fair or democratic, more especially when certain far-reaching consequences are likely to flow from that election. I have tried to raise these issues as objectively as possible.

I have, however, carefully reconsidered my draft statement and have varied it. I enclose a copy of this new draft, which I am issuing to the Press.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

Some friends, without my knowledge or consent, have put forward my name for the presidentship of the next session of the Congress. Others, whose opinions I value, have pressed me to accept it. Previous to this, it had not struck me as a possibility that I might be Congress President again. In view, however, of the complexity of the situation that exists today and the desire of some friends, I gave full thought to this matter. As a result, I am convinced that it would not be proper for me to stand for election so long as I am Prime Minister.

The Congress has somewhat different functions to perform now than in the old days when it was the embodiment of the struggle for the freedom of India. But even so, it has great responsibilities to discharge and it is of the utmost consequence that it should retain its faith in its objectives and ideals and that its organisation should be disciplined and capable of undertaking effective work on a large scale. Therefore it is important that the President should be able to devote himself to this heavy and onerous work. I cannot possibly do so. While my time is all taken up in my work as Prime Minister, it would not be fair to the Congress or to me, for me to make a gesture and stand for the presidentship.

All of us whose lives have been intertwined with the Congress for a generation or more, are deeply attached to that great organisation and consider it a high privilege to serve it. All of us are distressed at the weakness that is coming into the Congress from many directions. I have personally, in common with many others, been greatly perturbed at the fading out from people's minds of many of the basic principles for which the Congress has all along stood. If this foundation goes, how long can the superstructure remain, and even if it remains who will profit by it? Therefore it seems to me of the utmost consequence that the old principles of the Congress should continue to guide us and should be clarified and emphasised again.

During recent debates in Parliament I have ventured to lay stress on some of these principles for which the Congress has all along stood. I was surprised that even some Congressmen should have drifted away far from them and spoken in language which used to be completely alien to the Congress mind.

I hope the Nasik Congress will undertake the task of clarifying the Congress position and declaring afresh that the old ideals hold and the old approach to political, communal and other problems is still important. There is a sickness in the body and soul of the Congress which even a very large membership cannot heal. It requires an inner treatment and a more basic cure.

In the present crisis in Congress history principles are more important than individuals, and I earnestly trust that it is on the basis of these old principles that all decisions will be taken and the work of the country carried on.

Jawaharlal Nehru

New Delhi

11 August 1950

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New Delhi
12 August 1950

My Dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter of 11 August 1950.

I am sorry you could not accept my advice about the draft statement. I fully appreciate your difficulty, but I still feel that the course which I had suggested did full justice to your point of view also. However, since you have issued the statement, there is nothing further to be said about it.

I am sure you have read the tributes paid to Tandonji from all sides of the House, including the rebel group and Muslim MLAs, on his relinquishing the speakership and also Tandonji's statement. He has made it quite clear as to what his attitude generally is towards the decisions of the Congress. On the speakership issue, for instance, he said that he did not agree with the Working Committee's view, still he believed in discipline. He further said that he could differ from individuals, howsoever great, but not from the views held by the organisation to which he belonged. With this attitude of mind, which he has publicly expressed, I am doubtful whether any of us would be justified in entertaining any fears about his inability to adjust himself to the

principles and ideals of the Congress, and any fears to that effect might be construed as prejudging the issue. This was the apprehension I expressed to you before, and that is why I felt that the appropriate time for making a statement on Congress ideals and policy, which you intended to make, would be at the time of the Nasik Congress. What Tandonji has said in the UP Assembly further strengthens my view. Nor do I think that you need be apprehensive about any difficulty as regards your continuance as a member of the Congress Working Committee, or even of Government. A President is not always of one's choice. We have had to work with Presidents of this type in the past. I have no doubt whatsoever that that would not present us any difficulty. I cannot think of a President proving difficult on this score. A President has either to conform to the settled principles and programme or to quit. If Tandonji is elected, I do not think that the latter alternative would ever arise. He is too good a disciplinarian himself to present us with any such problem. It is, therefore, premature to settle your mind on any particular plan of action in the event of his election. I think we cannot take it for granted that he would follow a line of policy and action contrary to Congress ideals and principles. We should wait and see.

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

REPRODUCTION FROM MEMORY BY MR. G. I. RAMACHANDRAN,
GENERAL SECRETARY, AICC, OF A CONVERSATION
WITH MR. NEHRU

Ramchandran: I am grateful you have found a few minutes for me. I would not have come to you and taken up your time but that I discussed a certain matter with Shrimati Mridula and it was she who wanted me to see you. I hope you have some inkling already about what the matter is.

Jawaharlal Nehru: Yes, I know. It is about the presidential election. She sent me a note yesterday night. But do tell me what you have in mind.

R: The position is this. Till now we could all say, either Shankarrao Deo or Kripalani; but have we not reached a stage when entirely for non-personal reasons we should now be able to say, whether Kripalani or Shankarrao Deo definitely? Let me put it to you this way. Mridula came to Wardha, making it clear she came on her own. I was with her when she was talking to Kishorlalji. I do not want to repeat her words but this is

precisely the gist of what she said. "Panditji preferred Shankarrao Deo but just now the question is: who will be able to win against Tandon? It is fairly clear that Kripalani has wider support in the country and therefore Panditji feels that the stronger candidate should be supported." This is the clear impression I have of what Mridula said to Kishorlalji. There were other things but they were not relevant. Since coming to Delhi those working for Kripalani have corroborated this view as yours. Then, unexpectedly, I met Shri Nabha Chaudhuri, [Nabokrushna Chaudhuri], the Orissa Chief Minister. He told me something which gave me a different view. [He] had met you before I saw him and had talked to you about the presidency election. I very carefully went into his own impression. He told me after his talk with you that it was his very clear impression that you were inclined more to support Shankarrao Deo than Kripalani and he further told me that Mridula and a number of others were busybodies who were saying all sorts of things and making use of your name. I told Nabha Chaudhuri what Mridula exactly had said in Wardha. I was therefore troubled that your name is used by both sides. I, therefore, met Mridula again and put this matter before her. Then she said I should see you. That is why I have come to you personally. It is my view that it is no longer possible for us merely to say let one of the two come in because we were interested in both. But at this stage we have to calculate the chances and strengthen the stronger candidate. Are we not now in a position to assess the position of the respective candidates? Have you not been able to do so yourself?

N: I am afraid I must take some time to tell you the position. When the question of the presidential election first came up, there were three nominees—Kripalani, Tandon and Shankarrao Deo. I frankly felt that I should support Shankarrao Deo. Tandon is an old friend of mine. I have regard for him. I have faith in his integrity. I have known him from the time I was 10 years old. Today [if] he came and told me something as a matter of which he has personal knowledge I would trust him implicitly, but if he told me something about a matter about which he had no personal knowledge I would hesitate because I do not trust his judgment. Ordinarily, Tandon cannot be considered a communalist but the [partition] has so much affected him that it has affected his judgment. What he is saying and doing today is, in my opinion, what will strengthen the communalists in the country. He may not be a communalist, but today he has become a symbol of communalism in the present context in the country and I have frankly said that it would [not] be possible for me to work with him and that I would not be on the Working Committee of which he would be President. Rajaji told me that my attitude was not correct and that if I felt so it was my duty to tell the Working Committee so that the Working Committee would know my position correctly. I therefore asked Pattabhi [Sitaramayya] to call the Working Committee. He

did so. It was not a formal meeting, but most of the members were there and I told them what I had in mind.

R : So you still stick to that position?

N : I do. Then some of my friends asked me whether my attitude would be as rigid if it was Kripalani and not Tandon. I frankly said "No." There are differences between me and Kripalani and if he were elected, I said, I anticipate some trouble. Nevertheless, my attitude to Kripalani was totally different from my attitude to Tandon. In the case of Tandon, if he were elected it is the very basis of Congress policy that would be in peril. That would not be so in Kripalani's case. I said I would not say that if Kripalani were elected, I would not work with him. There may be difficulties, but that is a different matter. I thought there would be no difficulty whatever in Shankarrao's case. Therefore I did tell friends that I do not object to Shankarrao at all. Then some days ago friends, including Mahtab, came to me and said that the position was altered and that Kripalani had larger support in the country. I did not then hesitate to say that in that case Kripalani should be supported. I do not look at the matter personally at all.

R: Are we not today in a position to very definitely know which of the two candidates has a better chance as against Tandon ?

N : That is just I am saying. It does seem that Kripalani has wider support. But what do people want me to do? I do not want to get mixed up in a personal way in this matter at all.

R: Did you say that Shri Harekrushana Mahtab was one of those who told you that Shri Kripalani was likely to get more support in the country?

N: Yes.

R: In that case I am astonished that Nabha Chaudhuri told me that Orissa votes will go to Shri Shankarrao Deo. There must therefore be some mistake somewhere. After all, Shri Mahtab will have some influence in regard to Orissa votes. If the candidate getting larger support in the country should now get our support, then why did Nabha Chaudhuri say that Orissa votes will go to Shri Shankarrao Deo. Shrimati Sucheta Devi [Mrs. J. B. Kripalani] tells me that Orissa is the only weak spot for Kripalani and that he was getting support from elsewhere. Is it not therefore necessary to correct the information that Nabha Chaudhuri has taken with him about your attitude provided your attitude is clear at this stage [in] the circumstances that have arisen, that Kripalani should be strengthened?

N : I have made it quite clear that I am not taking any personal interest in regard to Kripalani. He too is so angry in relation to the problem of refugees that his criticisms are not sometimes constructive. Rajaji showed me some of the articles in the Vigil which have appeared recently. I know they are not his articles; but they have appeared in the Vigil. One was about

the speech Syama Prasad Mookerjee made in Parliament and Vigil seems greatly to appreciate it. But all this does not bother me.

R: Do you think Kripalani will bend before capitalists or communal influence?

N: I do not think so. I do agree that if Kripalani has larger support in the country we should strengthen him.

R: Is not the position clear today?

N: I suppose so. But what do you want me to do? I certainly do not want to interfere with people and make a fuss.

R: I most certainly would suggest no such thing. The only thing I would suggest is that you should kindly talk to Shri Mahtab and make the above position clear, and through him remove the misunderstanding in the mind of Nabha Chaudhuri. Orissa votes are very important just now and the stronger candidate should not lose them through a misconception that you are personally supporting Shri Shankarrao Deo.

N: That certainly I can do. I shall talk to Shri Mahtab.

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New Delhi
25 August 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I am writing to you after some hesitation. I have tried to keep away, as far as I could, from this Congress Presidential election business, although it affected me deeply. I thought that having made my position perfectly clear to some friends and pointed out certain consequences, I had done my duty. A few persons came to me and said that all kinds of rumours were afloat and I should say something more in public. I refused to do so although sometimes I realised that these rumours were not correct and were misleading. To start making corrections would have involved me in interminable argument. If a friend came to me—very few such persons came—I explained briefly what my opinion was. This was firm enough where I spoke frankly to members of the Working Committee. Developments since then have confirmed it and made it perfectly clear to me that if Purushottam Das Tandon is elected, then I have no further place in the Congress executive, and consequently also as Prime Minister. It is not Tandon personally that I object to. But he has become [a] symbol of something which I consider exceedingly harmful to the Congress and the country. His election thus would have meant, whether

consciously done or unthinkingly, support of these very ideas and forces.

On my way back from office late this evening, I dropped in at Rajaji's place. In the course of our conversation he mentioned that you did not think that I would act up to what I had said in the event of Tandon's election. That, in fact, I would adjust myself to the new situation. I was a little surprised to learn this for I had thought that I had made myself perfectly clear. It was this conversation that led me to think that I should write to you so that there might not be any misapprehension left. I am absolutely clear in my mind that, in the event of Tandon's election, I should treat it as a vote of no-confidence in me by Congressmen or at any rate by those who vote in the presidential election. As a result of this, I cannot function in the Congress Working Committee or other executives. As a further consequence, I cannot continue as Prime Minister.

Apart from the logic of this, I am certain that I shall have no heart in holding on to my present position. That would not be fair to myself or to the Congress or the country. There is far too much self-delusion and hypocrisy in our public life. We say one thing and then quietly ignore it and act in a contrary way. We pass fine resolutions and then forget them. I know I am myself guilty of this in common with others. I do not wish to add to this self-delusion and I think I shall be much happier as a free man, not bound by office of any kind.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

26 August 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thank you for your letter of today's date. We have already had a talk about this matter and said much that we had to say.

I think I have made one grave mistake, that is, I should have been more explicit in public about my views. I thought it was enough to be explicit to friends and to members of the Working Committee and to avoid a public argument. I wrote clearly enough to Tandonji. Now the mere fact that I did not say publicly what I felt deeply is an argument against me.

Ever since this matter was discussed, and even before, I was firmly convinced that Tandon should not be Congress President. Further, that if he was elected as such, I could not join the Working Committee. From this followed certain inevitable consequences which led to my leaving the Government. I made this perfectly clear repeatedly to you, to Rajaji, to Tandon, to the President (Rajendra Babu) and to members of the Working Committee. I had no doubt about it. If, in spite of this, Tandon is supported and is elected then it seemed to me clear that I was not wanted, or, to put it differently, Tandon's election was considered more important than my remaining in the Working Committee or the Government. That position has crystallised in the Congress mind.

I cannot possibly continue to function as I have done when I receive a public slap on my face and an expression of Congress disapproval of what I stand for. The resolutions that the Nasik Congress [passes] will no doubt be important but they cannot get over this patent fact. There is no point in my being Prime Minister in these circumstances. I shall be frustrated and disheartened and totally ineffective.

The question of my resigning early or late is a minor matter. The point is that I cannot avoid it. To avoid it is to be false to myself and the Congress.

As it is I feel increasingly incapable of effective work.

I shall not take any step without informing you. I do not wish to act in a hurry. But I have a strong feeling that I have exhausted my utility, for the present at least, for the Congress and the Government.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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27 August 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Since yesterday I have been feeling tired and exhausted. In spite of my best efforts to write to you myself I have not been able to do so. I have therefore had the letter written by Maniben for me. I wish you know how upset and distressed I am! In my present state of health it is difficult for me to bear this strain. I

do hope my suggestion in the last para of this [following] letter will appeal to you. I have deliberately made it brief because with persons ready to pounce at anything we say in order to misconstrue it, the less we say the better.

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

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27 August 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Many thanks for your letter of the 26th. After you left me yesterday both Rajaji and I had the feeling that you had gone more at ease. I am distressed to find that it was not so and your agony persists. My helplessness to do anything at this late stage is becoming an increasingly oppressive burden.

Prior to yesterday's talk, the only talks I had with you when Tandonji's question was discussed at some length, were two—one at Dehra Dun and the other here the day you called an informal meeting of the Working Committee. We had some correspondence as well. During these talks and this correspondence the farthest that the mention of your resignation went was in your letter of 11 August in which you said, "As I have told you, I may find it difficult to continue as a member of the Congress Working Committee or even of Government." In my letter of the 12th in reply I tried to point out to you that any apprehensions on this question were premature and that the Nasik Congress, and not the presidential election, should be the test.

As regards your correspondence with Tandonji, your letter of 8 August, a copy of which you sent me, makes no mention of any intention to resign if he were elected. It is confined to the necessity of explaining your opinion in some form or the other. In fact, in your last letter to Tandonji dated 13 August, of which the latter sent me a copy, you said you would like to talk to him about the various matters or write to him. In the meantime you had issued your statement to the Press, and the correspondence which passed between us about Tandonji and the talks which I had with Rajaji left me with the impression which Rajaji shared that you would wait for the Nasik Congress and

would not take any decisive step till then. It was for this reason that your letter of the 25th came to me as so much of a shock. Between my last letter to you dated the 12th and your letter of the 25th, I have never been consulted by you on this issue, and there was, therefore, no occasion for me to be enlightened about any change in your attitude or preference.

Regarding Tandonji, apart from my preference for him from among the candidates that are standing, the difference between your approach and mine is only this, that I am in favour of giving him a chance, and if he does not adjust himself to such decisions as the Nasik Congress might take naturally he has to go. There can be no question of your going out; on the other hand you condemn him right now and feel that his election itself would mean a defeat of your policy, etc. I hold that the latter is not in issue, since past decisions and policies of the Congress bind all presidential candidates, and the President is as much bound by it as any ordinary member of the Congress. This seems, strangely enough, somewhat similar to Kripalani's own view, as would be clear from the attached copy of his statement published a couple of days ago.

As regards candidates, you and I both agreed at Dehra Dun that Kripalani was out of the question. I strongly favoured Tandonji on personal grounds and disfavoured Shankarrao Deo. You disfavoured Tandonji and were prepared to accept Shankarrao on the principle of "lesser evil." I have throughout held that your condemnation of Tandonji was unfair and premature. I was not taken into confidence when recently your preference seems to have changed from Shankarrao to Kripalani. As I wrote to you yesterday, I refused to believe it at first; even now I am amazed as personally I regard Kripalani as having taken in the past, with reference to the points you hold against Tandonji, a more destructive and critical role against you than Tandonji has ever done. His speeches and writings in the Press will amply confirm it.

I really do not know what I can do at this late stage, practically on the eve of the election. I suggested an alternative name at Dehra Dun; we then agreed to Rajaji; Maulana and I agreed to Patil. Unfortunately, none of these was found possible. In this attitude of mental distress and doubt, I could think of only one way of relieving your mind. I am quite willing to issue a joint statement as in the draft [see enclosure] if it meets with your approval. Although I feel that any statement at this juncture is

likely to be misconstrued by one side or the other, I am prepared to run the risk if it would in any way alleviate your apprehensions.

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

ENCLOSURE
DRAFT STATEMENT

Persistent untrue or exaggerated—no doubt mixed with some truth—propaganda is being carried on about us in relation to the Congress Presidential election. Differences in regard to the merits and suitability of different candidates are natural but we hold that the policies and principles approved by the Congress bind all and the successful candidate will have to conform to any further decisions of policy touching the problems of the country which might be taken at the Nasik Congress. In these circumstances any talk of the success of one candidate or the other being a vote of no-confidence in any particular person or policy is beside the point. Both of us have unbounded faith in Congress policy and ideals and are in entire accord on fundamentals.

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27/28 August 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I received your letter this morning or forenoon. I did not answer it immediately. Partly I was engaged, but the real reason was that I wanted to give it as much quiet consideration as I could. I am writing this letter long after midnight.

I do not think it will serve any useful purpose for me to discuss the events of the past two months or more. At no time during these two months and much earlier did I have any doubt in my mind that Tandon's election would be bad for the Congress and the country and should be opposed. Whenever any occasion arose for it, I made this clear. Further, I made it clear that in the particular context of events today his election would affect my position greatly and make it difficult for me to continue in the Working Committee and as Prime Minister. It was with the specific purpose of making this clear that an informal meeting of the Working Committee was called. I spoke to them quite frankly and left no doubt in anyone's mind there.

I am exceedingly sorry that I did not leave a clear impression in your mind. The subject was a delicate one as we had the misfortune to differ and therefore I did not wish to refer to it repeatedly. Having, as I thought, explained my position to you fully, there was no need to do so again and again.

It is true that I agreed to wait till the Nasik Congress, but I did so in a different sense than the one intended by you. For me this only meant postponing the announcement of my decision, not of changing it or waiting for the resolutions of the Congress. My decision was that I could not serve in the Working Committee if Tandon was President. That held whatever the Congress might decide. That decision was taken for two major reasons: that Tandon had pursued during the past two years and was still pursuing a policy which, to my thinking, was utterly wrong and harmful and his election would undoubtedly give an impetus to this policy, and I must dissociate myself completely from it. Secondly, because the election was becoming more and more a [clash] between varying policies and Tandon became a kind of symbol of one and was as such being supported widely by Hindu Mahasabha and RSS elements. To join the Working Committee for me in these circumstances would be not only some kind of surrender to that policy, however I might explain or limit it, but would also be, in the circumstances, improper and undignified for me.

From this flowed other consequences—whether I could continue as Prime Minister. My idea was—and I explained this to members of the Working Committee—to wait till the Nasik Congress and then inform Tandon (as President) not to include me in the Working Committee. This had nothing to do with the decisions of the Congress, nor perhaps it would be more correct to say that it had very little to do with it.

In view, however, of other developments in this unfortunate campaign I began to feel that I should not wait till the Nasik Congress and should make my position clear even earlier. There has been so much confusion and crossing and double-crossing that a clear statement seemed to me called for. That, however, is a minor issue and, if so desired, I can refrain from any action till the Nasik Congress. But I do not see how that action is going to be affected much by the Congress.

You mention my later preference for Kripalani. I told you exactly what happened. When asked, I clearly gave my preference for Shankarrao. When asked what I would do if Kripalani

got elected, I said that I feared conflict and trouble but I did not look upon Kripalani as a symbol of something which I disliked greatly.

I am sorry I have inflicted a longer letter on you than I had desired. There is no end to arguments. On this issue my mind has been absolutely clear and I only regret that I did not, at an earlier stage, address the public. That was a lapse. But you will appreciate that what restrained me was a feeling of delicacy. It is after all not so much the election that counts but the feeling of my own friends and colleagues in regard to a matter to which I attached great importance. Because of that I feel helpless and incapable of useful or effective actions in the post I hold, whether in the Working Committee or the Government.

I am afraid the joint statement you have suggested will do little good. It does not represent what I have in mind—indeed, it goes against it to some extent. In any event, it is too late to issue statements now.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

152

29 August 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Many thanks for your letter of 27/28 August. I am sorry I could not reply to it yesterday, as I felt so very fatigued after the strenuous time of the last few days.

I am so unhappy to find that I have completely failed to convince you otherwise and that your mental distress still continues. However, I am relieved to feel that you have agreed to give some more time during which, I earnestly hope, the tension will relax and we shall be able to do some calm and dispassionate thinking.

I am sorry it has not been possible for you to agree to the issue of a joint statement. I made the suggestion to relieve the oppression and tension of your mind and if it did not serve that purpose it was no use my persevering with it.

Let me, however, make one more appeal to you with all the earnestness and sincerity at my command. Please suspend your judgment on the organisation and the men who have

been loyal and devoted to you all these years through thick and thin and test them on principles and not on personalities. Why attach so much importance to a symbol when what matters is the real thing—those principles and ideals for which the organisation stands and will stand.

I plead [with] you to reflect on these words and the consequences of the contemplated action carefully and calmly and not to come to any hasty or premature conclusions.

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

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New Delhi
27 August 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

You should excuse my perturbation and my continuing effort to intervene.

I feel that I should try yet.

It appears to me that much mischief has been done already, yet something may be done to retrieve what has been sadly confused. A joint public statement [draft below] issued by you and Jawaharlalji would be a great relief to the public. It should be true 100 p.c. and yet effective.

DRAFT

Much that is untire or exaggerated—no doubt mixed with some truth,—is being circulated about us in relation to the Congress presidential election. We deem it essential and in the public interest to issue this statement under our joint names.

It is true that the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister of India hold very different views about some of the candidates now standing for election, and they hold these views very strongly. But in spite of this we both hold the view that the decision of policies depends on the Congress that will meet at Nasik and the election of one or another of the candidates cannot be taken as a vote for any particular policy as far as we are concerned. We wish to state emphatically that this election is not to be regarded as a proof of any parting of ways between us.

The electors may and should exercise their votes freely without any idea of pleasing either of us. The Congress will decide any question that may be raised as to the policy that should be followed by Congressmen and nothing may be taken for granted on the basis of this election.

I feel you should at once take the initiative and suggest this course to Jawaharlalji.

Yours affectionately,
C. Rajagopalachari

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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27 August 1950

My dear Rajaji,

Many thanks for your letter of the 27th.

I have already sent a reply to Jawaharlal's letter of last night. I do not know why he persistently keeps on saying that he kept me informed of his intention to resign. In fact, on this issue I always had the feeling that he avoided a full and frank discussion with me and took me into confidence the least.

I do not know if it would be wise to make any statement with persons determined to misconstrue anything we say. However, I thought by my offer of a joint statement I might be able to relieve Jawaharlal of his mental distress. I have, therefore, suggested to him the attached draft.

It is somewhat different, though not in substance, from your suggestion but having regard to the likelihood of misconstruction, I feel the less we say the better. The draft as it stands means quite clearly that we stand united on fundamentals and the successful candidate will either have to conform to them or get out. I think that should satisfy Jawaharlal that he can rely on me to stand by him at the Nasik Congress.

Since I wrote the above I have read his letter to you. It is difficult for me to express myself on it. However, I have acted up to your advice and hope he will even now be able to view the position dispassionately and objectively.

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri C. Rajagopalachari

PS.

I am returning the letter you sent me.

New Delhi
16 October 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have written a letter to Purushottam Das Tandon today. This letter speaks for itself. I am enclosing a copy of it for you. I am also sending copies to Rajaji and Maulana. I am requesting them to keep it entirely to themselves.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

New Delhi
16 October 1950

My dear Tandon,

I have been feeling distressed and depressed about various developments and I feel I must write to you what I have in my mind. Not to do so would be injustice to you as well as to me. I am afraid I have been the cause of some distress to you as well as Rajaji and perhaps others also. Because of me, you had to delay the announcement of the Worling Committee for many days. I had no wish that this should be delayed, but somehow I did become the main cause for the delay. I have also caused much unhappiness to Rajaji for a different reason. I cannot undo what has been done. But at any rate we must try to look at things straight now.

I feel that all this confusion, embarrassment and distress had been caused because we avoided considering various subjects and matters in issue frankly and objectively as we should have done. One wrong step leads often enough to another. As you know, I have felt strongly in regard to some of the matters we discussed. Though we may not have gone into any detail, I think I made myself clear enough in regard to my principal approach. Owing to a number of circumstances, I agreed ultimately to joining the Working Committee. I did so with great reluctance and doubt and at the last moment, when Maulana telephoned to me today, I begged him, if possible, to leave me out. Having acted against my own logic and

inner urge as well as my intuitive feeling in the matter, I feel as if I had done something wrong, that I had indulged in something approaching disloyalty to myself. That makes me feel unhappy. Personal reactions have their importance, but they must be set aside so as not to influence too much a dispassionate consideration of any matter. I have tried to be as dispassionate as possible.

In the two discussions we had in the course of the last two or three weeks some names were mentioned, but obviously we were concerned with more vital matters than particular individuals. Individuals sometimes become symbols of such matters and hence their importance at the time. Behind our discussions lay differences, different objectives perhaps and different methods of realising those objectives. This does not mean that there was not much in common also. But sometimes that commonness of outlook is overshadowed by what becomes, in the context of things, important. As a result of our talks, two powerful impressions stood out in my mind. One was of this difference in outlook, the other was the reluctance on your part to go out of your way to meet my wishes. The two of course are closely akin to one another, and yet an attitude counts and makes a difference.

You were perfectly right in writing to me in one of your letters that it was your prerogative as President to form the Working Committee. Appreciating that, I told you yesterday that I would not like to take part in any further consultation in regard to the personnel of this Committee. So I have no right to complain. But I cannot help my reactions. When I heard from you the names of the members of the Working Committee, I felt even more pointedly than before how differently we looked at things. On a previous occasion, I had given a fairly clear indication of the type of Committee that I considered desirable in the circumstances. Your decision, which you had every right to make, goes contrary to what I had indicated. And so, while I have no right to object, I cannot help reacting to it. I told you as much on the telephone today when I said that I felt like a square peg in a round hole. The more I think of it, the more I realise that I can be of little use in this Committee and my effectiveness, such as it is, will be severely limited. I dislike being an ineffective member of any organisation, much more so of a committee with the great traditions of the Working Committee, with which I have been intimately associated for a quarter of a century. I have, therefore, this tussle in my mind and I want you to have a glimpse into it. I would hate to be in the Committee just in order to pull in a different direction most of the time. You have spoken of harmony in the committee. I am not likely to be a harmonious element in this particular Committee.

Most of us want harmony. But our ways of looking at it or of achieving it appear to be different. I have long felt, and I have stated in public,

that the Congress organisation was deteriorating and disintegrating and, at the same time, losing that vital touch with the public which gave it strength in the past. The youth of the country find no inspiration in it and look elsewhere. Many persons who have played or who are capable of playing a vital and important part in Congress work have drifted away or do not look towards the Congress. If an organisation ceases to attract such persons and the youth of the country, that organisation has little future.

I know that you are anxious to purify the Congress, as you put it. That is necessary provided it is done with a proper outlook. But even so, it is equally necessary to revive that vital spark which gave us strength in our younger days and to make people feel that the Congress has an open door for all worthwhile people. I fear that there is a widespread impression, justified by many facts, that that door is more or less closed, except when it is slightly opened to push out somebody. Our committees are governed by cliques and factions and any person who disagrees with us finds little welcome.

The major question, therefore, for me has been how to tackle this problem which is both political and psychological; how to stop this drift; how to open the door again for those against whom it has been progressively closed. In other words, to create an impression in the country that the Congress is that great joint front working for worthwhile causes, as it was in the old days; to create a future for the Congress and not merely to live on its past. Our country today, by and large, is suffering from a sense of frustration; there is no future which draws it forward and gives it hope and faith. We move in our petty spheres with petty ambitions and petty conflicts. I do not know if it is possible to get out of this rut. But it is certainly worth trying. If even that is denied to us then life loses its main purpose. It used to be the privilege of the Congress to give shape to this future. It does so no more and we think progressively of the day-to-day problems which engross us.

If the Congress organisation is to prosper, then it must be reformed both from below and from above. The top counts a great deal, for it sets the pace. During the last two or three years that top has functioned badly. Our AICC office has not dealt with its work in the manner it should have done and I believe that many of our local troubles have increased because of this lack of proper functioning at the top. There has been far too much manoeuvring for positions and far too much desire to keep the other fellow out. Complaints have poured into our office. They have been dealt with inadequately or have not been dealt with at all. Much can be done or prevented from being done by the AICC office. In any event it is essential for the organisation that there should be faith and confidence in the working of this office.

From this point of view, I fear that the new arrangement is not satisfactory. I am not concerned with individuals but rather with the impression that is bound to be created and which goes a long way in raising or lowering the tone of an organisation. We have not got a smoothly running machine which any person can work. The machine has cracked up and requires a good deal of repair and servicing.

Thinking as I do, I cannot grasp how I can function effectively in this set-up. I can remain more or less a silent spectator, except for occasional expression of views. That is not fair to me or to you and is not a sufficient justification for me to be there. It would only have an irritating effect on all concerned and disturb the quiet harmony of proceedings. I could only remain there if I felt that the situation was going to be grasped in the way I wanted it to be grasped and that a new turn will be given to the Congress organisation so that the existing conflicts and frictions may tone down and the feeling of deep grievance which many good people have should be removed. That is a difficult task no doubt, but there appears to be no other way.

Presently, the question of elections will be upon us and the business of selecting candidates. I have always recoiled with distaste from this business and I have had no share in it. But the issues before us and before the election are too serious for any of us to be indifferent. It was because of this that I mentioned elections in the statement I issued before the Nasik session of the Congress. The matter may come up in the Working Committee, possibly in connection with the revision of the constitution. But that is a formal approach. What do we or what does the Working Committee intend to do in the matter? Are we to have a closed-door policy, such as has prevailed in many Congress committees for some time, or are we to view this and other questions afresh and with a different mind? This is another aspect of the question to which I have referred above. In all these matters I can only be effective if I agree with the method of approach and the objective before us; otherwise I am totally ineffective and can take no useful part.

I am opening my mind to you and I should like to do this also to the Working Committee when it meets so that all of us may know where we are and where we are going to. It is not much good to bypass these matters and to hope for the best. I want your permission, therefore, to raise these questions at the first meeting of the new Working Committee. After that meeting, I shall have to consider what the position is and how far I fit into it.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Shri Purushottam Das Tandon
Congress President

CHAPTER VIII
MATTHAI EPISODE

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New Delhi
31 May 1950

My dear Dr. Matthai,

You will be handing over charge today and I feel I must say how very sorry I am that you should be leaving us. In whatever capacity you have served as Minister, whether as Finance Minister for six or seven weeks in 1946 or subsequently as Minister for Railways and Finance, it was a genuine pleasure to serve the Government with you as my colleague. Your sincerity of purpose, clarity of views and the ability, experience and intelligence, which you brought to bear upon our manifold problems, always commanded respect and admiration. Your refreshing candour and the strength of conviction behind your views always added additional points to your advice which we always valued. Your great service to the country, first in bringing the Railways from the dislocation of the war to the settled conditions of peace and subsequently as Finance Minister in guiding the country through the many financial and economic shoals which threatened its stability, will always be remembered by your grateful countrymen. It is with a genuine feeling of regret and loss of a distinguished and valued colleague that I am writing this letter to you and I pray that your services would still be available to the country for years and years to come.

2. It is difficult to speak with any reserve of the great work which Mrs. Matthai has done for the suffering humanity. Her deep understanding of human suffering, the gentle touch of her kindly hand and her selfless zeal in all humanitarian causes have endeared her to all and sundry not only in the Capital city but also outside. Our prayers and blessings will follow her wherever she may be and I do hope she will continue her interest in the manifold voluntary undertakings which she took upon herself.

To both of you I send my sincerest best wishes and an expression of my genuine regard.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Dr. John Matthai
Minister for Finance
New Delhi

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EXTRACTS FROM A STATEMENT ISSUED BY DR. MATTHAI
ON HIS RESIGNATION

3 June 1950

Dr. John Matthai told the Press Trust of India today that his "attitude to the Planning Commission" was only one of the main reasons for his resignation from the Nehru Cabinet.

Dr. Matthai, who was replying to the Prime Minister's speech yesterday at Trivandrum, said in a statement to the PTI, that his other differences with Pandit Nehru were also over the "vital question of the control of governmental expenditure" and that he was one of the Cabinet Ministers who had had "grave misgivings" in regard to the recent Indo-Pakistan pact and had "anticipated the gradual disillusionments that recent developments have produced."

The differences over the Planning Commission, said Dr. Matthai, were not only over its setting up but also in regard to its working. "I consider the Planning Commission not merely ill-timed but in its working and general set-up ill-conceived," he declared.

Dr. Matthai felt that the Planning Commission was tending "to become a parallel Cabinet" and said that "Cabinet responsibility has definitely weakened" since its establishment. The former Finance Minister was critical of the composition of the Commission with the Deputy Chairman, "a paid Government employee," as its day-to-day presiding authority and with the Finance Minister as an ordinary Member and of the Commission's association with the Cabinet in the discussion of current economic problems. Characterising this as "an unsound arrangement" Dr. Matthai thought that it would "weaken" the authority of the Finance Ministry and "gradually reduce the Cabinet to practically a registering authority."

Maintaining that the Planning Commission was "totally unnecessary and in fact hardly qualified for its work," Dr. Matthai said that what was required at present was the drawing up of "an order of priorities" for existing plans, a work which the present Planning Commission "is not competent to handle."

Discussing his other differences with the Prime Minister, namely, "the vital question of control of expenditure," Dr. Matthai said that the present hudgetary position "is more difficult than at the time I presented the budget." He said that there was "a general tendency" amongst the various Ministries to "disregard" the authority of the Standing Finance Committee and said that some of the "greatest offenders were the Ministries directly under the control of the Prime Minister."

When departures from accepted practice were approved by the Prime Minister "it has a demoralising effect on other departments of Government and the Finance Minister's position is unnecessarily made difficult," he added.

Dr. Matthai referred to his differences over the Indo-Pakistan pact and argued that though "a policy of appeasement is inevitable under the circumstances," under that guise "vital national interest should not be bartered off." The Government was trustee [of] millions of human beings and had no right "to sacrifice without adequate consideration and sufficient justification the interests of those committed to its care."

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TELEGRAM

EXTRACT

INS DELHI

4 June 1950

MESSAGE FROM PRIME MINISTER TO DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER: BEGINS. HAVE READ MATTHAI'S STATEMENT. DO NOT PROPOSE TO REPLY TO IT TILL MY RETURN. BUT IN VIEW OF WHAT HE SAYS CONCERNING INDO-PAKISTAN AGREEMENT, PERHAPS YOU MIGHT MAKE CLEAR THAT THERE WAS CONSTANT AND ALMOST DAILY CABINET CONSULTATIONS AND EVERY STEP TAKEN WITH ALMOST UNANIMOUS CABINET APPROVAL. I DO NOT REMEMBER MATTHAI OBJECTED AT ANY STAGE EXCEPT LONG BEFORE CONVERSATION WITH LIAQUAT ALI KHAN STARTED. ENDS.

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TELEGRAM

5 June 1950

From Foreign New Delhi
To The Prime Minister of India
On Board INS DELHI

FOLLOWING FOR PRIME MINISTER FROM SARDAR PATEL. QUOTE. HAVE RECEIVED YOUR MESSAGE. MATTHAI'S STATEMENT HAS CREATED LITTLE ADVERSE PUBLIC REACTION. STATESMAN CALLED IT UNEDIFYING AND CRITICISED HIM BOTH ON PROCEDURE AND ON MERIT. OTHER PAPERS ALSO GENERALLY GAVE IT A MIXED RECEPTION. I WAS CERTAIN THAT BUT FOR MAULANA'S STATEMENT THE MATTER WOULD HAVE BLOWN OVER BY THE TIME YOU RETURNED. FOR THIS REASON AND ALSO BECAUSE PUBLIC CONTROVERSY AMONGST MINISTERS OR EX-MINISTERS SEEMED TO BE UNDIGNIFIED, I MYSELF FELT IT UNNECESSARY TO INTERVENE. NOW THAT MAULANA HAS ALREADY ISSUED STATEMENT ANY FURTHER STATEMENT FROM ME WOULD MERELY WIDEN THE RANGE OF THAT CONTROVERSY AND KEEP MATTERS ALIVE POSSIBLY TILL YOUR RETURN. I FEEL THIS WOULD BE MOST UNFORTUNATE AND MIGHT ADVERSELY AFFECT PUBLIC FEELING AS WELL AS REVIVE MATTERS AND MEMORY WHICH PUBLIC HAS BY NOW FORGOTTEN. ON THE WHOLE THEREFORE I WOULD PREFER TO MAINTAIN SILENCE. I SHALL WATCH REACTION AND IF AT ALL IT BECOMES NECESSARY FOR ME TO SAY SOMETHING I SHALL DO SO AT APPROPRIATE MOMENT. WE HAVE ALSO TO BEAR IN MIND THAT IN REGARD TO MATTHAI'S ATTITUDE SOME OF OUR COLLEAGUES WHOM I CONSULTED AND MYSELF HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT HE WAS CRITICAL OF POLICY ON MORE THAN ONE OCCASION THOUGH HE AGREED EVENTUALLY TO GIVE IT FAIR TRIAL. THIS IS EXACTLY THE POSITION HE HAS MAINTAINED ON INDO-PAKISTAN PACT THOUGH I AGREE THAT THE LANGUAGE USED IS NOT QUITE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE TREND OF HIS VIEWS IN THE CABINET. I THEREFORE SUGGEST THAT THE MATTER HAD BETTER BE LEFT AS IT IS UNTIL YOUR RETURN. UNQUOTE.

On Board INS DELHI
4 June 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have today read the statement issued by Matthai. It has pained me considerably. I have sent you a brief message by wireless. It is for you to decide if you should say anything in reply. More especially in regard to the statement made by Matthai about the Indo-Pakistan Agreement.

I am writing a letter to Matthai and I enclose a copy of it.

I should have liked to have a full party meeting to consider this matter. If that is difficult then the executive committee of the party should meet. Also I think the Congress Working Committee.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal Nehru

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE
EXTRACTS

On Board INS DELHI
4 June 1950

My dear Matthai,

The statement that you issued, in reply to my remarks at Trivandrum, had been conveyed to me on board ship and I have read it with care. It was not my intention to enter into any controversy with you on the subject of your resignation. When asked about it at a Press conference in Delhi, I avoided the subject. When however certain newspapers in Madras, commenting on your first brief statement, drew rather extraordinary conclusions and asked for further explanations, I felt that something had to be said by me. I had also heard that it was rumoured in Bombay that the cause of your resignation was a difference of opinion in regard to the exchange ratio. I felt that all this was creating an undesirable confusion in the public mind and so I decided to say something in the course of my speech at Trivandrum.

I confess that, quite apart from any difference of opinion between you and me, I have regretted the tone of your statement and the assumption

underlying it that I am guilty not only of wasteful expenditure but also of bartering away vital national interests; that I do not realise or appreciate that Government is a trustee of millions of human beings and apparently prepared to sacrifice without adequate consideration and sufficient justification the interests of those committed to its charge.

So far as the Planning Commission is concerned, I shall not say much here except that I do not think you have been quite just to it in some ways. At no time has there been any question in the Planning Commission's mind or any other mind for that Commission to function as a parallel Cabinet. You refer to the Warrant of Precedence, salaries etc. I would have been glad if you had drawn my attention to these matters at some earlier stage. Indeed, I knew very little about them myself and it was only on the eve of my departure from Delhi that I enquired into the matter.

You refer to the interference of the Planning Commission in the work of the Government and more particularly to its advice on cotton policy. I am sorry that you should have referred to something which was a Cabinet secret. Cabinet secrets are not normally discussed in public. Apart from this, I do not understand how it can be considered an interference with governmental working if we took the advice of any experts at our disposal.

You refer to the Ministries under my control disregarding the authority of the Standing Finance Committee and thus setting a bad example to other Ministries. I do not know which Ministries you refer to other than the External Affairs Ministry. I do not control any other Ministry directly, unless it is the Scientific Research Department which is not a Ministry. You refer particularly to the recent decision about Dublin. Whatever the merits or demerits of that decision, this took place long after your decision to resign and therefore could not have influenced it.

You refer to the budgetary position being more difficult now than at the time you presented the budget. This undoubtedly is so. Is this not so because of certain new and heavy commitments in regard to the Defence Ministry?

The other point you refer to is your disapproval of the Indo-Pakistan Agreement of last April. While this Agreement was being considered, and indeed while the talks with the Pakistan Prime Minister were going on, we had almost daily Cabinet meetings, apart from meetings of the Cabinet Committee appointed for the purpose. I do not remember of a single instance during these meetings of your objecting to what was being done. Sometimes previous to that, when we were considering the broader question and long before Liaquat Ali Khan had been asked to come to Delhi, you had generally expressed your opinion in favour of war. How far that was in keeping with our trusteeship for millions of human beings, opinions may differ. But at no time subsequently, while the talks were going on with Liaquat Ali Khan and drafts were being considered, did you protest against

the policy adopted. I am surprised therefore that you should have now mentioned that you regarded the conclusion of the agreement with grave misgivings.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Dr. John Matthai

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TELEGRAM

4 June 1950

From Foreign New Delhi
To Prime Minister of India
On Board INS DELHI

FOLLOWING FOR PRIME MINISTER ON BOARD INS DELHI FROM SARDAR PATEL. QUOTE. DHARMA VIRA HAD FLASHED TO YOU FULL TEXT OF MATTHAI'S REPLY TO YOUR SPEECH AT TRIVANDRUM. AM MOST UNHAPPY ABOUT IT AND IT WAS ALL SO UNEDIFYING AND LIKELY TO MAKE PUBLIC APPREHENSIVE AND RAISE AVOIDABLE PUBLIC CONTROVERSY. LAST EVENING PIO SHARMA SHOWED ME TEXT OF STATEMENT WHICH MAULANA SAHIB INSISTED SHOULD ISSUE. EARLIER IT APPEARS PIO ADVISED MAULANA AGAINST IT AS THAT WOULD ONLY PROVIDE FURTHER TARGET FOR CONTROVERSY AND SUGGESTED HIS SHOWING STATEMENT TO ME AS IT REFERRED TO CERTAIN CABINET MATTERS. MAULANA REJECTED THAT ADVICE. ON GOING THROUGH TEXT I FELT IT WAS STILL INADVISABLE TO ISSUE IT PARTLY BECAUSE I FELT MATTER HAD BETTER BE DEALT WITH BY YOU IN MANNER YOU DEEMED MOST SUITABLE PARTLY BECAUSE IN MY VIEW STATEMENT MIGHT PROVOKE COUNTER STATEMENT FROM MATTHAI AND OTHERS PAST OR PRESENT MINISTERS AND PARTLY BECAUSE IT WAS INACCURATE SPECIALLY WHERE IT STATED THAT MATTHAI HAD NEVER IN CABINET EXPRESSED HIS DISLIKE OF THE PACT. MAULANA DID NOT ACCEPT MY ADVICE AND ISSUED STATEMENT WHICH APPEARED THIS MORNING. BEFORE COMING TO DEHRADUN I HAD TALKS WITH MUNSHI,¹ BALDEV SINGH² AND SRI PRAKASA.³ ALL DEPLORE FILLIP TO CONTROVERSY GIVEN

¹ K. M. Munshi: Started political career as joint editor of Young India, 1915; elected member of Bombay Legislative Assembly, 1927; AICC member, 1930-36; Home Minister (Bombay), 1937-39; member, CA, 1946-50; in between Agent-General, Government of India in Hyderabad, 1948; Central Food Minister; Governor of UP; Founder of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay

² Akali leader; Development Minister, Punjab, 1942-46; joined Congress and served as Defence Minister, 1946-52

³ MLA (Central), 1934 and 1945; member, CA, 1946; High Commissioner in Pakistan, 1917-49; Commerce Minister in Nehru Cabinet, 1950-52; successively Governor of Assam, 1949-50; Madras, 1952-56 and Bombay 1952-62

BY MAULANA'S STATEMENT. I MYSELF AM BITTER ABOUT MAULANA'S ATTITUDE BUT REALISE MY LIMITATION IN DEALING WITH HIM. ALREADY PUBLIC REACTION WAS ONE OF DISLIKE OF MANNER IN WHICH PUBLIC CONTROVERSY HAD BEEN RAISED ON ISSUE OF MATTHAI'S RESIGNATION. STATEMENT HAS ACCENTUATED THAT FEELING. I FEAR IF MATTHAI OR SYAMA PRASAD OR ANY ONE ELSE POINTS OUT INACCURACY REGARDING MATTHAI'S ATTITUDE, MAULANA WILL HAVE TO FACE PUBLIC DISCOMFITURE. AM WRITING TO YOU IN DETAIL. HOPE YOU ALL ARE ENJOYING YOUR VOYAGE AND YOU ARE HAVING GOOD REST. UNQUOTE.

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TELEGRAM

5 June 1950

From Prime Minister on Board INS DELHI
To Foreign, New Delhi

PERSONAL FOR SARDAR PATEL FROM PANDIT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU. QUOTE. YOUR MESSAGE JUST RECEIVED. I HAVE NOT SEEN MAULANA'S STATEMENT. REGRET HE REJECTED YOUR ADVICE. MATTHAI'S STATEMENT INSULTING TO ME, DEROGATORY TO THE CABINET, IMPROPER FOR EX-CABINET MINISTER, INACCURATE AND FULL OF BITTERNESS. IT IS CLEAR THAT THIS MATTER CANNOT REST WHERE IT IS AND PUBLIC CONTROVERSY CANNOT BE AVOIDED. BUT I PROPOSE TO SAY NOTHING TILL MY RETURN UNLESS SOME NEW CIRCUMSTANCES COMPEL ME. SO FAR AS I REMEMBER, MATTHAI SAID NO WORD AGAINST AGREEMENT WITH PAKISTAN AT ANY STAGE AFTER TALKS WITH LIAQUAT ALI KHAN STARTED. BEFORE THAT HE HAD EXPRESSED HIS OPINION. I AM AMAZED AT THE IMPROPRIETY OF MATTHAI'S BEHAVIOUR. UNQUOTE.

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On Board INS DELHI
5 June 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I received your wireless message this morning and sent a reply to it. I have had no indication of what Maulana said in his statement, except what you have mentioned. I am sorry he was in a hurry to make a statement, contrary to your advice.

For my part, as I have told you, I would rather remain silent from the public point of view till I return. But I have a feeling that some of the charges he has made do require, if not a reply, at least some kind of a response. I would not like this to be controversial as far as possible. However, it is difficult for me to judge from here and you are the best judge.

What Matthai has said raises very important issues, both political and to some extent constitutional. There is a personal element also, though that might be ignored except for the fact that even this has a certain larger connotation. I think it was very improper of him to refer, even though this was indirect, to Cabinet proceedings. However the main thing is the question of principle involved in the two principal matters raised by him, that is the Planning Commission and the Indo-Pakistan Pact. The Planning Commission is after all a domestic matter, the other has international significance. It seems to me that when these important questions are raised, we cannot allow them to pass. Regardless of what Matthai or any of us may think, the matter having been raised in this way, has to be decided clearly and emphatically. It is a great pity that Parliament is not in session and will not meet for some considerable time. It is difficult also for a party meeting to take place. I am almost inclined to think that it would be worthwhile summoning a meeting of Parliament earlier than was at first intended, in order to clarify these matters. We cannot leave the country in a state of flux with controversies going on. Only Parliament can clearly decide.

We are a new Government and have no fixed conventions, except in so far as we follow British conventions. Matthai's statement raises the question of our developing certain fixed conventions so that irresponsible behaviour might be avoided.

Before we started on our voyage, everyone told us that the first two days would be rough, as we would encounter monsoon weather. As a matter of fact we have had lovely weather and there has been no rain at all. I have had a restful time, except for my spending much of it with the officers, petty officers, ratings, etc., and visiting various parts of the ship. Our crew consists of very bright young men who would compare well with any other country's crew. You have yourself met them. The Commodore, who captains the ship, has struck me as a good man.

This morning we had the usual ceremonies connected with the British Navy of crossing the Equator. Father Neptune is

supposed to come on board and challenge the ship and then he awards various punishments. Neptune is now becoming Varuna. The ship's company thoroughly enjoyed the sport which chiefly consisted of a forcible ducking in a pond.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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Camp Dehra Dun
5 June 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

I sent you a message yesterday about Maulana's statement in reply to Dr. Matthai. I have also sent a message today in reply to yours. I attach copies of the two messages, in case you have not received them, in an unmutilated condition.

2. As I telegraphed to you, I am very unhappy about Maulana's attitude. I myself feel that the public reaction to Matthai's statement was not what probably he desired. It had a mixed reception. Circles usually critical of us, of course, welcomed it with some glee, but others thought it was unedifying and undignified. The Statesman was particularly critical and I am enclosing a copy of the Statesman's editorial which, I think, is fairly representative of general public reaction. I feel myself that, if the matter had been left at that, it would have been forgotten by the time you returned and your own statement then would have given it a coup de grace. Much against my advice—had it been somebody else it would have been something more than an advice—the Maulana decided to issue a statement which, to my mind, raises controversies which could and should have been avoided. I am sending herewith a copy of my letter to Maulana which would explain the position. The PIO, who advised Maulana against at least mentioning Cabinet matters and in favour of seeking my advice before issuing the statement, had rather a hostile reception. Dharma Vira must have sent you a copy of Maulana's statement. You will, therefore, be in a position to judge things for yourself. I can only tell you that the view which I have taken of the whole thing, as well as of reactions to Matthai's statement, is shared by all those whom I could consult in Delhi prior to my departure for Dehra Dun.

3. I am keeping myself in touch with public reactions to this controversy and, if at all I find it would be any use my saying something about the Indo-Pak Agreement, to which you have referred, I would do so. Personally, however, I feel that such a necessity would not arise and, unless Syama Prasad Mookerjee tries to make capital of the controversy between Matthai and Maulana and lends support to the former, or any of our colleagues enters into a controversy, which, in view of Maulana's intervention, I would be powerless to avert, it is possible that a situation might be created in which I might have to say something. For the present, therefore, I will wait and watch.

4. I hope you had a good voyage. Matthai's statement must have upset you, as it did me, but I do not think that it is at all necessary to prolong any feelings of bitterness or anger. It is only by a calm and dignified approach to this matter that we can blunt its edges.

5. We had a Cabinet meeting on 3 June. The most important item discussed was the salaries of Ministers of State and Deputy Ministers. By including Ministers of State in the Council of Ministers, according to the Presidential Order of 5 May 1950, those Ministers became entitled to the same salary and emoluments as the Cabinet Ministers. The position, therefore, had to be put right. We also thought that the position of Deputy Ministers might also be regularised. A third point was raised as to whether Ministers could draw, in addition, the pensions which they had earned from public revenues. As you know, prior to 1 January 1948, there was a definite prohibition against the drawal of these pensions, so long as the pension-holder held the office of a Minister. When we discussed the Ministers' Salaries Bill, this particular point was never considered or raised. I had no doubt that, if it had been considered, we would have retained the previous ban. In the Cabinet, all of us felt that the position under the Government of India Act 1935 was sound and had better be restored. Deshmukh did not like it and, in view of the attitude which you had taken over the case of Gopalaswami Ayyangar and Dr. Matthai and the absence of the former, we decided to postpone a decision on this particular issue. A view was also expressed that the Act might authorise a Minister to accept a lesser salary. This was with a view to avoid payment of income-tax on the full salary, even though a Minister might voluntarily draw a lesser amount. Some of us thought that this would be undesirable, in that public reaction might be

adverse to those who would be drawing the full amount. However, the matter has been remitted to the Home Ministry for further examination in consultation with the Central Board of Revenue.

6. When you meet President¹ and Madame Soekarno, please give them my kindest regards and best wishes and tell them that the memories of their visit are still fresh in my mind and I hope the difficulties which Indonesia is experiencing and which are always associated with the birth-pangs of freedom will soon disappear.

7. Some time ago, I had written to Dr. Subbarayan² to study the historical contact between India and Indonesia and to find out whether a deputation of scholars from India to Indonesia would not enable us to understand this history better and to realise its full bearing on our own ancient culture. You would be visiting Bali and I should very much like you to exchange ideas with Dr. Subbarayan and others who might be competent to assist us on this problem.

8. I had a letter from Rajaji saying that his eyes are still giving him trouble. I am rather getting apprehensive about the condition of his eyes. I do hope his stay at Ooty will do him some good.

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Camp Indonesia

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TELEGRAM

6 June 1950

From INS DELHI
To Foreign New Delhi

PERSONAL FOR SARDAR PATEL FROM JAWAHARLAL NEHRU. THANK YOU FOR YOUR SECOND TELEGRAM. YOU ARE IN AUTHORITY POSITION TO JUDGE AND I SHALL TAKE NO ACTION TILL MY RETURN AND THEN IN CONSULTATION WITH YOU AND OTHER COLLEAGUES IN THE CABINET.

60 Bazlullah Road
Tyagarayanagar
Madras
8 June 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thank you for your kind letter and enclosures in connection with the nuisance that Dr. Matthai is making of himself.

I entirely agree with you in your appraisal of Dr. Matthai's statement. Had I been in Delhi and had the opportunity to write about the affair to the Prime Minister, I could not have said anything different from what you have said, or expressed it better than you have done, in your last telegram to him and the letter of confirmation following it.

I am not reading anything and dictate such few letters as I write to a volunteer private secretary and I do not keep any copies of even important letters. It would be too much to ask my generous secretary to prepare and preserve copies. Otherwise, I would have sent you copies of my letter to Jawaharlalji addressed to Indonesia and of my letter to Sri Prakasa on his assumption of office in Delhi. I have in these two letters expressed my surprise and disgust at the manner in which the pledges taken solemnly and on oath to preserve the utmost secrecy about Cabinet discussions and differences were violated by Dr. Matthai as if those oaths did not bind him after the period [of] his office terminated. If there was any inkling of his intention to issue the statement it would have been proper for the President to have warned him against it.

Compare Dr. Matthai's behaviour with the silence preserved by Lord Wavell¹ on his being recalled, in spite of the provocation he had to launch out against the policy which resulted in Mountbatten replacing him. How much have we yet to learn!

I can understand your annoyance at Maulana's adding to the trouble in spite of your advice. Perhaps if you had an

¹ Viceroy and Governor-General of India, 1943-47; GOC-in-C, Southern Command, 1933-39; Commander-in-Chief, Middle East, 1939-41; ADC, General to the King, 1941

opportunity and spoken to him personally, he would have accepted your advice, as he has so often done and indeed as we have all done, in the course of our companionship and joint struggle all these many years. Advice given in letters has not the same effect as personal talk and the silent appeal of the eyes of friendship. Letters appeal to the reason whereas face-to-face talk touches the heart direct.

I may however tell you that we may ignore Maulana's statement. Nothing much will issue out of it even as you have rightly observed that Dr. Matthai's statement might be left to fade out. True, some further advantage may be taken of Maulana's statement by persons who are interested in maintaining a controversy; but on the whole a policy of disregarding these statements is the best line to take.

My general health is quite good as I know how to take care of it, but I do not know what to do with my eyes. I am still in Madras postponing my intended recoupment plan in Ooty. I did not feel inclined to go with eyes that require constant attention on the part of doctors, as guest in Ooty Government House. I am today much better but the swelling is still there and the tendency to a relapse of the inflammation is also there. You are perfectly right in feeling grave doubts as to the wisdom of my going to Delhi during the worst part of the year in that place. Indeed I have begun to doubt the wisdom of the whole experiment of reharnessing me to any kind of work in Delhi. But I do not wish to give up the battle without an honest fight. I hope you are taking good care of your health. Perhaps we old people are thinking too highly of ourselves, but I do not see how things can get on without you. See that you keep well.

Love,

Yours affectionately,
C. Rajagopalachari

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

Camp Dehra Dun
11 June 1950

My dear Rajaji,

Thank you for your letter of 8 June 1950.

2. I am glad to know that there is such a measure of agreement between us on the issues of Matthai's statement and Maulana's reply. I could not see Maulana myself because I came to know about it only after dinner when it was too late for me to go out. I do not think, having regard to his usual habits, Maulana could have come to see me at that hour either. I tried to send to him [Sir G. S.] Bajpai,¹ who expressed great hesitation, and Dharma Vira who was unfortunately unavailable.

3. I am sorry to know that your eyes are still troubling you. I hope the monsoon weather will help you to cure yourself of this trouble. I have managed to escape from the heat and dust of Delhi but Dehra Dun is also quite warm sometimes and I feel the heat. However, it is not so bad and, in any case, it is impossible for me to go up any higher.

4. It is a great pity that more and more strain is falling on your shoulders which are now getting old. Sometimes one feels like retiring to a life of comparative rest and freedom from worries, particularly when one harbours some feeling of helplessness to avert a course of action which one feels is definitely leading the country into difficulties of a most unusual kind. So many problems seem to confront us, organisationally as well as administratively, but the lack of clear-cut policies and decisions is hampering us in dealing with them adequately. The immediate provocation for these thoughts is my preoccupation with the problem of cotton policy. I have been crying hoarse for the last three months for a clear-cut policy to be announced so that we might secure some appreciable increase in its outturn. First the *Planning Commission delayed matters*, then there was a lot of confusion as a result of different theories and prejudices; then

¹ ICS; Secretary-General, Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations, from June 1947; Adviser on deputation to UN Security Council for discussions on Kashmir; Governor of Bombay State

there was a halting decision on some problems and a postponement of that on others and now we find an overwhelming sense of urgency. However, this is all in the day's game.

With affectionate regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri C. Rajagopalachari
Madras

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New Delhi
3 June 1950

My dear Maulana Saheb,

The PIO, Mr. B. L. Sharma, has just now shown me, as he was bound to, the statement which you propose to issue to the Press. I myself feel that it would have been better if you had left the matter to be dealt with by the Prime Minister as he thought best. It is quite clear from Dr. Matthai's statement that the matter is rather personal between him and the Prime Minister. As it is, I do not like the controversy which has been started by Dr. Matthai's second statement. However, he has issued a statement and I think the Prime Minister is the most suitable person to deal with it, as constitutionally he should. Apart from this, I feel that for an individual Minister to issue a statement of this kind would be rather inappropriate, particularly if it contains some factual inaccuracies which, as I would show later, have occurred in your statement. If these inaccuracies remain, it might provoke some counter-reply from Dr. Matthai or some of our ex-colleagues, who were present in the Cabinet at the time, and even present colleagues. I should certainly like to avoid all this in the interest of the good name of our own Cabinet no less than with the intention of leaving the Prime Minister a free hand to deal with the matter as he likes. I am arranging for the whole statement to be wirelessly to him on board ship. The inaccuracies to which I have referred above are as follows:

(b) It is not correct to say that Dr. Matthai did not oppose the [Nehru-Liaquat Ali] Pact during its discussion in the Cabinet. I recall several times when Dr. Matthai did express his opposition in emphatic language. In fact, we were all surprised at Dr. Matthai taking so much interest in the discussion over this issue.

2. My advice to you would, therefore, be that you should not issue this statement and leave it to the Prime Minister to deal with the statement as he likes. I do not think the delay would very much matter. If, however, you feel that you must do so, although I would regret this decision of yours, I feel that you should correct the inaccuracies to which I have referred above. I have asked Sharma to await your instructions.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Minister for Education
New Delhi

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New Delhi
4 June 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Many thanks for your kind letter of yesterday. Had the statement of Dr. Matthai been limited to personal affairs between him and the Prime Minister there could have been no reason for a third party to interfere. But he has discussed the appointment of the Planning Commission and has not only held it useless but has tried to prove it injurious as well. We have appointed the Commission and have raised hopes in the public mind that it would be helpful in removing the present troubles of the country. Personally, I consider it to be a very important work and I am deeply hurt if any one tries to ridicule it. Dr. Matthai has undoubtedly a right to put his point of view before the public and similarly those who differ from him must also get a chance to speak out their mind. I have said nothing new in my statement. I have only expressed my views about the Planning Commission. I thank you for the advice which you have kindly given to me. I have always valued your advice and shall do so in future, but you should excuse me if I have felt the need of putting my idea before the public in this connection.

In regard to financial control, you have written that when the 20% cut was decided, the Prime Minister was in America. I think full facts have not come to your notice in this connection because you were probably out of Delhi at that time. The proposal of 20% cut had come up before the Cabinet in the presence of the Prime Minister. It was hotly discussed in two successive meetings. Dr. Mookerjee, Kidwai and Rajkumari strongly objected to it. I too was not prepared for the cut. On the contrary, Pandit Nehru supported the Finance Minister with all emphasis and requested all the Ministers to support the Finance Minister during the present financial crisis.

After that it was decided that you and the Finance Minister would call for details from all the Ministers and give a final decision. Accordingly you gave the decision. So whatever I have written is not incorrect. Had I got even the least doubt in its accuracy I would never have liked to refer to it.

I may also mention here that the procedure adopted by Mr. B. L. Sharma was not proper. If he considered the publication of a Minister's statement inadvisable, he could bring it to the notice of his Minister. The Minister could then have a talk with me in this regard, or he could bring it to your notice as the acting Prime Minister (as he did later on). The matter would have ended there and then. But he himself chose to object to the statement and advise me personally in this matter. This could in no way be proper. He is a publicity officer. He is not the adviser of Ministers. You can well imagine my reactions to his lecturing. The first question I put to him was whether he was speaking to me on behalf of his Minister or on his own behalf. He replied that he had not mentioned it to anyone up to that time; but he considered it necessary to advise me on his own behalf. Naturally my reply could be none other than that I did not need his advice, and that he should not dare advise Ministers.

I hope he would be directed to bring such matters to the notice of his Minister, who would take whatever action he would deem necessary.

Yours sincerely,
A. K. Azad

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Acting Prime Minister
New Delhi

Dchra Dun
6 June 1950

My dear Maulana Sahib,

Thank you for your letter of 4 June 1950 which I received this morning.

2. Like you, I myself did not like Dr. Matthai's statement. When I said that the matter had been treated by Dr. Matthai on a personal plane with the Prime Minister, I referred to the fact that he was giving the points on which he had differed from the Prime Minister personally and I still feel that the best reply could have come from the Prime Minister himself. Nor did I feel it necessary that any of us should intervene in this matter because I anticipated—and my anticipations have come true—that the Press and the public would react adversely to Dr. Matthai. On the whole this has been so. I still regard your intervention most unfortunate. Dr. Matthai's statement has been rightly called 'un-edifying'. It was hardly necessary for any of us in that case to follow it up. There was also another reason. I felt that it would have added to the prestige of the Cabinet as well as to the position of the Prime Minister if he had spoken on behalf of the Cabinet Ministers rather than individual Ministers aired their own views. You issued the statement as a Member of the Cabinet and I tendered to you my advice as Deputy Prime Minister. This was not as if we were dealing with this statement as Congressmen. I feel—and to be quite frank I am quite sore about it—that my advice to you given as Deputy Prime Minister should have been constitutionally accepted.

3. As regards the point about emergency cut, the 20% cut was not accepted before the Prime Minister left for America. I am quite clear about it because I was present at the Cabinet meetings before he left when Dr. Mattahi gave an account of the financial position and suggested his remedies. All that happened before the Prime Minister left was that the Prime Minister felt that cuts and economy were essential. As to of what order it should be was left to the committee of which he, I and the Finance Minister were members. He left for America immediately after and the whole burden of imposing cuts and implementing them fell upon

me and the Finance Minister. Dr. Matthai told me himself that before the Prime Minister left for America he had written to him seven or eight letters pleading for some costly scheme or other. After his return also Dr. Matthai got some letters from the Prime Minister. My apprehension was and still is that Dr. Matthai might issue a rejoinder to you giving these instances which would rather compromise the statement which you have made and might embarrass the Prime Minister in dealing with Dr. Matthai's statement with full freedom. It was this contingency which I wished to avoid.

4. As regards the procedure adopted by Mr. B. L. Sharma, he saw you himself because his own Minister was away at Hubli and the Secretary, I & B. Ministry, was touring Jammu and Kashmir. In these circumstances, he was the only one who could tender advice to you and I think in publicity matters he is entitled to tender it. I have not discouraged him from tendering advice to me also. After all, he is in touch with the Press. He knows the people. He knows also the mechanism and art of publicity. Nevertheless, when he went to you and failed, I realised the handicap from which he was suffering in the absence of his Minister and Secretary. Not being able to come myself because of the late hour at which I came to know of it, I tried to contact Sir Girja Shankar Bajpai and Dharma Vira to ask them to see you and dissuade you from issuing the statement. Sir Girja Shankar was reluctant and hesitant although he agreed with my view that the statement should not issue. Dharma Vira could not be contacted as he went out to dinner to a place which had no telephone.

5. I think the PIO knows full well that normally he must approach an honourable Minister through his own Minister and in view of the circumstances which I have explained, I think no such direction, as you have suggested, is necessary.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
New Delhi

Camp Chashma Shahi
Srinagar
17 June 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Your letter of 6 June was received here in Srinagar on 12 June. I am replying it today. The delay is deliberate as I did not want to write to you under any immediate reaction on the receipt of your letter. I wanted to consider the matter with a cool mind and this naturally meant that some time was necessary for it.

You have said in your letter, "I feel and to be quite frank I am quite sore about it that my advice to you given as Deputy Prime Minister should have been constitutionally accepted." I will assure you not for one moment did I see the matter in that light which is now disclosed by your letter nor could I ever imagine that you would so feel about it. Let me refer you to your first letter in this connection. I had no idea that you were objecting even to my statement being released at all. What I felt after the receipt of your letter was that you would prefer that the matter was left to Pandit Nehru to deal with but if I considered its publication necessary I was free to make my choice. In that case you thought it would be better if no mention was made about the 20% cut as it related to a matter which could be contradicted by Dr. Matthai.

Naturally I thought you wanted me to say those things only which you felt could not be contradicted and the portion that could be contradicted you had drawn my attention to it. I read that portion and I felt that as far as the real point of Dr. Matthai's statement was concerned I had not said in my statement anything which may be regarded as not in accordance with facts. Therefore, I let this portion remain as it was. I could not have any notion that you were objecting to the very idea of the publication of such a statement.

Let me put the matter in another way. As soon as Mr. Sharma got the statement he should have gone to you with it. My relationship with you is not only as a member of a Cabinet but it goes much deeper. You could have phoned to me and advised me against its being released. I would certainly have expressed

my feelings about it and perhaps I might have persisted in my arguments for it. But if you had stuck to your views about it, surely I would have given up the idea of its publication altogether. It was an ordinary matter, not affecting any fundamentals. In matters like this, without going into arguments, one gives preference to one's colleague's opinion and should have no hesitation in following his advice.

In your second letter you have said, "All that happened before the Prime Minister left for America was that the Prime Minister felt that cuts and economy were essential." What I have said in my statement is that the Prime Minister was with the Finance Minister in the latter's demand for cuts and economy of expenditure. I am afraid I do not find anything more than this in my reply to Dr. Matthai. Nevertheless, if you feel that this portion of my statement does not interpret the facts rightly, I am prepared to correct my statement in this behalf in accordance with what you think about it and to say that what actually happened was that though the Prime Minister had expressed himself in favour of cuts and the need for general economy, the final decision in this connection was made by the Deputy Prime Minister and the Finance Minister after the Prime Minister had left for the States and the programmes of the various Ministries had been carefully scrutinised.

But, as far as I am concerned, the matter does not end there. What I feel about your second letter I should be frank with it and should tell you what it is.

The Indian Cabinet is not yet three years old but our relationship with each other is of more than thirty years. We were brought together very close on account of the Indian National Congress and the leadership of Mahatmaji. We struggled together like members of the same family for the freedom of our country. We spent together our hours of joy and together we drank the draughts of bitterness. We shared with one another our joys and our sorrows. If we were together for the meetings of the Congress Working Committee, the Indian jails also found us together to spend our days there. We had our disagreements on many an occasion and we had our quarrels. But, as our unity was that of brothers, so were our disagreements and quarrels. If we quarrel among ourselves, soon we were to unite once again.

After we had achieved freedom we formed ourselves into Government. But, here also we did not enter from different doors. We came in by only one door and found ourselves bound

together in unity of outlook and goal. Soon we were faced with extraordinary happenings and difficult problems and it was not easy to work in unison in those stupendous moments. Yet these hard trials could not break the strong bonds of comradeship that had existed among us for many years past. We marched on hand in hand and faced the extraordinary together.

From our old comrades many have left us for good. Those of us who are still alive have almost reached the journey's end. As far as I am concerned, I regard three of my friends as my old comrades and in no circumstances am I prepared to sever my close ties with them. They are Jawaharlal, yourself and Rajendra Prasad. I will never allow that our relationship be ever strained for a moment, particularly when this relationship is now thirty years old and has got behind it the whole history of this long period.

From your letter it appears you have felt strongly over the publication of this statement of mine. You have said, "I feel and to be quite frank I am quite sore about it" As I have said above I am sorry I do not find anything in it which should have agitated your mind to this extent. However, in matters like this argument is of little avail and I would not like to go into it. I am prepared to resign from the Cabinet without any bitterness on my part. It is not necessary I should serve my country from inside the Government only. Perhaps I may serve her better for the remaining days of my life from outside of it. To me the most important question is that I cannot stay in a place where I may be the cause of any worry to my comrades of 30 years.

I hold more dear the continuance of the relationship that has existed between us than the membership of the Cabinet.

I hope you will excuse me for this long letter.

Yours sincerely,
A. K. Azad

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
Camp Dehra Dun

Dehra Dun
21 June 1950

My dear Maulana Sahib,

Thank you for your letter of 17 June 1950.

I was unhappy about the whole thing because I was placed in an embarrassing position. The matter was referred to me as Deputy Prime Minister. At the same time, my relations with you are more 'unofficial' than 'official'. If I did not act I might have been committing a dereliction of duty and, if I did and you did not accept my advice, it would place me in an embarrassing position vis-a-vis others. It was in this quandary that I wrote to you hoping that you will accept the advice tendered; at the same time, in order not to hurt you in view of the relations which subsisted between us, I left the choice to you. My first letter was directed against the very question of your making a statement. I only pointed out that in two particular matters I thought your impression was not correct.

I understand that Dr. Matthai, as was to be expected, was not quite happy about your statement, but restrained himself from adding to the controversy; otherwise, the controversy would have probably been unending and led to bitterness and might even have affected the atmosphere about the Indo-Pak Agreement which is now prevailing. It is all this that I wanted to avoid.

This does not mean that our relations are in any way affected. They transcend official contacts and are based on years of comradeship in freedom's struggle and the conduct of affairs of a great and noble organisation. You can dismiss any thought from your mind that on this account our relationship has in any way been strained.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
Srinagar

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TELEGRAM

16 June 1950

From Foreign New Delhi

To Indembassy Djakarta

FOR PRIME MINISTER FROM K. P. S. MENON.¹ FOLLDWING MESSAGE HAS BEEN RECEIVED FROM RAJAJI FOR TRANSMISSION TO YOU. BEGINS. FROM C. RAJAGOPALACHARI, MADRAS, TO PRIME MINISTER. YOUR LETTER DATED 4 JUNE, MATTHAI'S STATEMENT HAS FALLEN FLAT. ON THE WHOLE I AM SURE IT WOULD BE BEST TO SAY NOTHING MORE IN PUBLIC. IT IS MOST IMPROPER THAT DIFFERENCES IN CABINET SHOULD BE DEALT WITH IN PUBLIC AND WE SHOULD NOT OURSELVES BE GUILTY OF SUCH IMPROPRIETY BECAUSE OF MATTHAI'S ERROR OF CONDUCT. YOUR PRESTIGE HAS NOT IN THE LEAST BEEN PREJUDICED IN THE PUBLIC EYE. VALLABHIBHAI HAS SENT ME COPIES OF HIS TELEGRAM TO YOU AND CONFIRMING LETTER. I AGREE WITH HIM ABOUT UNDESIRABILITY OF FURTHER CONTROVERSY AND IN HIS APPRAISEMENT OF EFFECT OF MATTHAI'S STATEMENT. ENDS.

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Srinagar

18 June 1950

My dear Sardar,

I had a letter some days ago from the P.M. about the statement I made on my resignation. I enclose a copy of my reply for your personal information. [See Enclosure I to S.No. 176] If he makes a public statement on his return and I have to issue a rejoinder, it will not help either his prestige or that of Government —on practically every point he has raised, he is on weak ground.

I trust you are well and fit.

¹ ICS; Agent-General, Government of India, in China, 1943-47; Ambassador in China, March 1947; Foreign Secretary, Government of India, May 1948-September 1952; Ambassador to USSR, Hungary and Poland, 1952-61

Kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
John Matthai

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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Camp Dehra Dun
21/22 June 1950

My dear Dr. Matthai,

Thank you for your letter of 18 June 1950.

2. I am rather unhappy about the way things have developed subsequent to your departure from Delhi, nor can I face with equanimity the prospect which you held out. The correspondence between the Prime Minister and yourself seems to have made the matter worse. I really do not know what to do.

3. I hope both of you are enjoying your stay in Srinagar. I envy you your holiday. I wish it were possible for me to have some rest, but that is a counsel of perfection.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. John Matthai
C/o The Imperial Bank of India
Srinagar

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New Delhi
27 June 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I enclose copies of Matthai's letter to me and my reply to him.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE I

EXTRACTS

C/o The Imperial Bank of India
Srinagar

17 June 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

I have just received your letter of 4 June written from board ship regarding my statement to the Press [See enclosure with No. 160]. The contents of the letter have not of course surprised me. There is a lot I would like to say in reply, but I will be brief. Let me deal seriatim with the main points you have raised.

One of my reasons for not making any reference to the specific matters at issue between us was that I could not do so without revealing what took place at Cabinet meetings. May I point out that it was you who made public the discussions that took place between us regarding the Planning Commission?

As regards control of raw cotton, the decision of the Cabinet had been published and ceased to be a secret.

Your suggestion that you were bound by the decision of the Congress Working Committee is hardly relevant. If the Prime Minister is to be bound by the decision of the party caucus in so important a matter to the extent you presume, there is an end to parliamentary government as one knows it.

You ask me for cases where you have gone against my recommendation. You appointed Trone and extended his tenure against my advice.

Similarly you extended Gyan Chand's tenure in spite of my strong objections repeatedly expressed.

I objected to the scale of allowances proposed for the Planning Commission but on which in the end I accepted an unsatisfactory compromise because of their persistence and your tacit agreement.

As far as I can remember, within the last 12 months I was faced with three ex post facto proposals presented to me by the External Affairs Ministry in anticipation of the Standing Finance Committee's approval, for which I had to make apologies to the Committee and with difficulty secured their agreement. I may say that no Ministry's expenditure proposals have met with greater opposition at the Standing Finance Committee's meetings.

In referring to the Dublin embassy, I took the latest case that came to my notice. But the principle involved is the same as in the cases that occurred before my resignation.

At the meeting of the Cabinet held at Government House the morning before Liaquat Ali Khan arrived I made a categorical statement of my objections to the talks.

My alternative in that statement was not war as you now suggest. I objected because the tactical advantages we had in (1) the presence of our troops at the East Bengal frontier, (2) the serious economic crisis in East Bengal, (3) the severe burden of defence expenditure in Pakistan and (4) Liaquat's approaching visit to America and anxiety to impress the Government there with his desire for peace, could have been used to much greater purpose.

You accuse me of discourtesy. I have, I admit, used strong expressions in the heat of argument, perhaps to the point of discourtesy. But my discourtesy has been only in speech. You have shown me discourtesy in action of a kind I had never expected from you.

Yours sincerely,
John Matthai

ENCLOSURE II

EXTRACTS

New Delhi
27 June 1950

My dear Matthai,

Your chief grievance appears to be that I treated you unfairly in suggesting to you to resign. What surprises me is that you should have cared to continue in a Cabinet of which I was the head when your opinion about me is such as is expressed in your statement and your letter. If you have such a poor opinion of me personally and were so strongly opposed to the policies I wished to pursue, then there was not much common ground left for us to work together in a Cabinet.

I was always under the impression, at any rate for some months past, that it was your desire to go and that it was because of consideration for me that you were staying on. I did not wish to impose this burden upon you and hence I made the suggestion I did to you.

You refer to my being bound by the decision of a party caucus and say that if this is so, it means an end to parliamentary government. Perhaps I may claim some knowledge of parliamentary government also and even

more so of the Indian political background. If a party has gone to the country on the basis of a programme, its first duty is to follow that programme in so far as it can.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Dr. John Matthai
C/o The Imperial Bank of India
Srinagar

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Dehra Dun
21 June 1950

My dear Rajaji,

I am glad to learn from the papers that you have at last left for Ooty and that you are now feeling better. I hope your stay in Ooty will do you a lot of good and your eyes will improve.

I have seen your telegram to the Prime Minister about Matthai's statement. Personally I feel that if Maulana had not issued his statement and Jawaharlal had not written to Matthai, (I presume he has sent you a copy of his letter) but had merely issued a guarded public statement on return, things would have blown over. As it is, if he makes a statement, since he is so upset over this matter, it is unlikely that it will be moderate or temperate and Matthai will, in that case, feel bound to reply. It would all result in an unseemly and undignified public controversy. I hope Jawaharlal will restrain himself and will allow tempers to cool down before he does anything. A good case is sometimes lost by an unnecessary exhibition of temper.

I intend remaining in Dehra Dun, unless some unforeseen development takes place, until about the middle of July. I do not know what your programme is. I hope you will come to Delhi by that time.

From my talks with some people who have seen me, I am somewhat apprehensive about the reactions of your coming to Delhi on the party. The old prejudices which do not seem to have died down yet are likely to be revived and there might be some

trouble. However, we shall have to deal with the matter, if it arises.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri C. Rajagopalachari
Madras

178

Government House
Ootacamund
24 June 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Your kind letter of the 21st. Thank you very much for writing.

I have no doubt whatsoever in my mind that beyond saying that it would be improper for Cabinet differences and affairs to be continued to be discussed in public, whatever be the provocation, Jawaharlalji should make no further statements on the subject of Dr. Matthai's resignation and subsequent pronouncements. No one in the country or outside has been impressed by what he has said and the P.M.'s position is quite unaffected.

If from your talks with some people who have seen you you apprehend that the party may react unsatisfactorily to my being asked to join the Cabinet and there might be some trouble, I do not see why you should hesitate to drop the matter. It would be the wisest and cleanest thing to keep it pending until you both meet the party and ask them not to endorse what you have done—but whether they like it and would want the Prime Minister to press me to accept, who am not only physically unfit but am quite unwilling, but only deem it a duty to respect the Prime Minister's wish when he puts it on the ground of national emergency. If they demur I should think you can well drop the idea.

My illness would then be a God sent that gave you an opportunity to rectify matters. If Jawahar and you accept this course, you should ask me to continue down here until the matter is settled.

I am sending this to Jawaharlalji in an open cover so that he might see the letter and forward it to you. This is because I have here no one to copy or type and I do not wish to use H.E. the Governor's staff for the purpose.

Hope you are well. I am much better both in the eyes and generally. The monsoon has, fortunately for me though it is

bad for the peasants, beld back and the rains have not started here. It is mild and sunny although it is late June.

Yours affectionately,
C. Rajagopalachari

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabbbbai Patel

179

Dehra Dun
27 June 1950

My dear Rajaji,

Thank you for your letter of 24 June.

2. I have received a letter from Jawaharlal today in which he tells me that he does not propose to make any statement in reply to Matthal's and will content himself merely by replying to his personal letter. So far so good.

3. What I wrote to you about certain feeling in the party regarding your appointment was not intended in any way to upset you or us. My only object was to tell you what some people were feeling and that there might be some grumbling in the party. I know how sensitive you are and I felt that if I did not inform you now of the existence of such a feeling, even though at present amongst a comparatively few, you might feel that you have not been kept in touch. There is no question of our dropping you. We are prepared to face the music, though I do not anticipate that it would come up directly. It is possible that on some issues this undercurrent of grumbling might come on the surface but we can deal with it at the appropriate time.

4. Jawaharlal must be anxious that you join your duties soon. He must be wanting also to talk to you about so many things. In that case I feel that you might come to Delhi as soon as you think you can do so without running any appreciable risk with your health. Delhi is still quite warm, but I expect in about a week or ten days' time it will settle down.

Yours affectionately,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri C. Rajagopalachari
Government House
Ootacamund

CHAPTER IX
CONSTITUTION IN OPERATION

180

New Delhi
5 May 1950

My dear Minister,

As you know, the new Constitution of India provides under Article 74 for the formation of a Council of Ministers. Article 75 provides for the appointment of the Prime Minister by the President and the appointment of other Ministers by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister.

In order to avoid any hiatus and to facilitate the transition from the old to the new, certain temporary and transitional provisions were made in the Constitution. Article 381 makes provision for all persons holding offices as Ministers for the Dominion of India immediately before the commencement of the Constitution to continue as Members of the Council of Ministers of the President until the appointment by the President of a Council of Ministers under Article 75 of the new Constitution. In accordance with Article 381 the old Cabinet continued as a provisional Council of Ministers. It is desirable that the procedure as contemplated by Article 75 should now be followed. I am therefore submitting today the resignation of myself and my colleagues in the Council of Ministers to the President.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

New Delhi
5 May 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I informed you this morning that I was submitting my resignation and the resignation of my colleagues in the Council of Ministers to the President today. The President has accepted the resignation and, at the same time, in pursuance of Article 75(1) of the Constitution of India, appointed me as Prime Minister. In accordance with the Constitution, he has asked for my advice as to the other Ministers to be appointed under that Article.

I enclose a copy of a letter I am sending him tendering this advice. In the event of this advice being accepted, it is proposed to have the swearing-in ceremony at Government House tomorrow, Saturday, 6 May 1950, at 11 a.m.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

ENCLOSURE

New Delhi
5 May 1950

Dear Mr. President,

I thank you for your letter of today's date accepting the resignation of myself and my colleagues in the Council of Ministers and appointing me as Prime Minister. I am sensible of the honour and the high responsibility of this great office and shall endeavour to discharge the duties connected with this office to the best of my ability. I submit below my advice and recommendations in regard to the other Ministers to be appointed:

CABINET MINISTERS:

1. Sardar Vallabhbhai Jhaverbhai Patel
2. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad
3. Dr. John Matthai

4. Shri Narasimha Gopalaswami Ayyangar
5. Shri Amrit Kaur
6. Shri Rafi Ahmed Kidwai
7. Shri Jagjivan Ram
8. Sardar Baldev Singh
9. Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar
10. Shri Narhar Vishnu Gadgil
11. Shri Jairamdas Doulatram
12. Shri Kanaiyalal Maneklal Munshi
13. Shri Harekrushna Mahtab

MINISTERS OF STATE:

1. Shri Charu Chandra Biswas
2. Shri Ranganath Ramachandra Diwakar
3. Shri Mohanlal Saksena
4. Shri Satya Narayan Sinha
5. Shri Kasthuri Ranga Santhanam

Dr. John Matthai has expressed a desire not to continue in office, but, at my request, has agreed to do so till the end of this month.

Shri Jairamdas Doulatram and Shri Mohanlal Saksena have been good enough to agree to continue in office till alternative arrangements are made.

I have invited Shri C. Rajagopalachari to join the Cabinet and I have every hope that he will agree to do so.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

Dr. Rajendra Prasad
Government House
New Delhi

New Delhi
16 May 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have not written to you because you have been constantly on the move as I could not easily reach you at Cape Comorin or thereabouts.

I went for the week-end to Srinagar and came back yesterday. My visit did some good and clarified matters.

I do hope you will be able to return here some few days before I go away. I am leaving on the 31st early morning. Rajaji intends coming here on the 26th and Sri Prakasa will also come on that day. We are issuing a Press announcement tomorrow morning to say that both Rajaji and Sri Prakasa have been appointed Cabinet Ministers and will take charge towards the end of the month. Also that Jairamdas will be Governor of Assam.

I am sorry to say that Rajendra Babu's health is giving us a lot of trouble and anxiety. He has got over his fever and cough and the doctors do not find anything specially wrong with him. But he is very weak and is in a continuous state of acute depression. He had a bad night last night with a severe headache. He is a little better today and slept for some time. What I am worried about is his state of mind and depression and his general weakness. I hope this will pass soon.

You will be glad to know that both Munshi and Mahtab have thrown themselves into their work with zest and energy. They are applying fresh minds and rather shaking up things.

Our Cabinet will be complete after Rajaji and Sri Prakasa join it and I do not wish to add to it. [G. B.] Pantji¹ came here today and I had a long talk with him. I found that he was wholly averse to joining the Central Cabinet. So I told him that I would press him no more and he could stay on in UP.

The only question to be settled now is that of portfolios for those who have not already got them. The major question is that of Finance. I had thought at one time that Rajaji might take it. But he objected to it strongly and I think he was right. It would not be right to thrust this heavy burden on him. His health too is none too good. Rajaji made a remarkable suggestion that either you or I should take Finance. I pointed out that this was quite impossible. We arrive, therefore, by a process of elimination, to the effect that at present the only person available in the Cabinet is Gopalaswami Ayyangar. It may be that some months later we might be able to make a change.

¹ Leader, Swaraj Party, UP Legislative Council, 1923; member, Congress Working Committee, from 1931; General Secretary, All-India Parliamentary Board, 1934; elected MLA (Central), 1934 and Deputy Leader of Congress party; Premier of UP, 1937-39; member, Central Parliamentary Board and Chairman, UP Parliamentary Board; Chief Minister, UP, April 1946-January 1955, Home Minister, Government of India and Deputy Leader, Congress Parliamentary party, till his death on 7 March 1961

As for Rajaji, he was agreeable to taking Foreign Affairs. But on full consideration I feel that he should not have any regular portfolio. We should follow the British practice of having a senior statesman without portfolio. There they call him the Lord President of the Council. We need not have a pompous name like that. Rajaji could take up many important types of activity as well as chairmanship of some Cabinet committees. It is always open to us to change later. In any event he is not well at present and he should not be burdened too much.

I am writing my present ideas to you, but I do not propose to finalise this business till Rajaji and you are here.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

183

Bombay
18 May 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter of 16 May 1950 which I received this morning on my return from Cochin.

2. I had originally planned to return on the 31st because I thought you would be leaving on the 2nd. In view of your departure from Delhi on the 31st morning and what you say, I have now decided to return on the 28th. I had fixed up some engagements on the 27th and 28th. I am cancelling the one for the 28th, but the one for the 27th, I am sorry, cannot be postponed. Otherwise I would have come on the 27th itself.

3. I share your anxiety about Rajen Babu's health. I had a talk with Satyanarayan Babu this morning and that made me even more anxious. I hope he will get over his present mood fairly soon, otherwise it would not be good either for him or for us.

4. I am glad to know that both Munshi and Mahtab have taken to their respective duties with zest and energy. Munshi is dynamic and has got brains. I myself sometimes wonder whether we would be utilising him to his fullest advantage in the Food and Agriculture Ministry. Mahtab is a steady, sincere and earnest type who, with some experience and knowledge of the affairs of his department, should be able to make a success

of his job. He will probably require a little guidance, at least to start with, but that is not a thing which need worry us.

5. I am glad that you have decided not to press Pantji against his inclinations. We can never get the best out of an unwilling hand.

6. On the question of portfolios, my own feeling is that Finance is a portfolio with which we cannot take any risks. Nor can we fill it on a temporary basis. After a great deal of effort we have managed to turn the corner and we should now try not only not to upset the present position which we have reached, but fully to cash in on the improvement which we have made. Any temporary appointment would be rather upsetting. Even on other grounds I feel that we should not disturb Gopalaswami Ayyangar from his present post. He has far too much to do not only in the Railways but the other matters which you have been entrusting to him. Also I do not think that his appointment would be regarded as denoting a full recognition of the difficulties and problems with which the Finance Ministry is faced. My own feeling is that we might draft either [C. D.] Deshmukh or Gaganvihari [G. L. Mehta] from the Planning Commission for this post. After all, we have practically put the two posts on the same status and both these men have the background and experience which should make them do their job adequately and well. Deshmukh would be my first choice. Whether he would accept or not, I do not know. But in case he does not, I think Gaganvihari would be suitable. His record as President of the Tariff Board indicates that he is quite capable of balancing the requirements of the business community and the general consumer and tax-payer and it is this balanced outlook which we need above all in a Finance Minister of the present day. I have known him for a long time and I feel that he should be able to assert himself sufficiently on the executive side. However, these are all matters which you can turn in your mind. We can discuss it fully when we meet and come to a decision before you leave. I do not think we should keep the present state of suspense for long.

7. I think, on the whole, you have done well in not forcing Rajaji to accept the Finance portfolio. I do not think that in his present state of health he would be able to stand the strain of it all. I have received two letters from him today which indicate that he is not quite physically fit. I am rather getting apprehensive whether he would be able to come to Delhi on

the 26th or, if he does so, whether he would be able to stand the rigours of the Delhi climate at the present moment.

8. As regards Rajaji's portfolio, I am personally in favour of giving him a specific portfolio. Somehow a Minister without portfolio under our set-up is not sufficiently effective and is likely to feel somewhat at sea in regard to his specific duties. Apart from this, I feel that the whole burden of foreign policy should not fall merely on you and that there should be somebody else also not only to share your burden but to pick up the thread of foreign affairs under your guidance. I cannot think of anybody other than Rajaji who could look after the External Affairs portfolio with success and distinction.

9. I had a talk with Satyanarayan Babu this morning and from his talk it seems that [John] Matthai is somewhat discontented in regard to the manner in which he has been asked to go. From what you told me I had assumed that he himself wanted to go. I think it would not be quite good for us at the present moment to send out anybody under a sense of grievance. I would, therefore, suggest that you might have a further talk with him and try to assuage his feelings.

10. I have had a fairly successful and enjoyable trip to Cochin and back. It is a beautiful country though with an enervating climate. I found a great deal of enthusiasm and devotion to our cause everywhere. My drive from Trivandrum to Cape Comorin was particularly revealing. People turned out in thousands to greet me and I can only conclude that at least in this distant corner of India, contrary to what one hears about other places, the enthusiasm and support for the Congress is certainly not on the wane. The Ministry is trying to function as effectively as possible, but unfortunately the communal conflict between Hindus and Christians is being revived by a section of the people. As you must have noticed from my speeches and statements, I have done my best to counter this tendency. In any case, I have advised the Ministry to fight it out in case those who are indulging in these tendencies do not themselves see the errors of their ways. I am quite convinced that any conflict between Hindus and Christians would be suicidal to the interests of Hindus themselves in the name of which these misguided persons are exploiting the situation. Organisationally, there is the problem of funds and a question of discipline over the Hindu Religious Endowments Bill. About 14 members of the Congress Assembly Party voted against this measure. I met them and

tried to persuade them to purge themselves of the breach of discipline which was undoubtedly involved in their voting against this measure contrary to the party whip. I also told them that if they could do so, I would be prepared to look into whatever allegations or grievances they have against the Ministry or the party executive. They seemed to appreciate the position and promised to write a letter expressing regret to the Leader of the party. I heard this morning, however, that a section of these people were misrepresenting my talks with them. I have, therefore, sent a telegram to Narayan Pillai¹ giving him a gist of the advice I gave them and the action which I suggested and they promised to take. I have, therefore, asked Narayan Pillai to send for these people and ask them if they proposed to accept my advice; if not, then they can deal appropriately with the question of breach of discipline. I found that this particular set of Congressmen was rather communal minded and am doubtful whether, if they do not listen, the Ministry will have any other alternative than to deal with them rather strictly. It is imperative that this tendency to exploit the communal situation is nipped in the bud. I am writing this in order that when you go to Travancore-Cochin you might not be taken unawares.

11. The sea voyage on the [INS] DELHI was refreshing and interesting. I am sure you will enjoy the trip to Indonesia. It is a pity that you would be going at a time when the sea would be inclined to be rough. But once you are on the other side of the Equator, you might not have so much difficulty. I suggest that when you go on board, you have a discussion with Comm. Barnard on the question of cruiser vs. aircraft-carrier about which Prof. Blackett held a strong opinion. I found Comm. Barnard an interesting and intelligent officer who had had ample experience of naval warfare and whose views are certainly entitled to a great deal of consideration. The discipline on the ship was excellent, a thing which gladdened my heart and I found the men in fine fettle.

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

¹ A leading Congressman of Travancore-Cochin Union

New Delhi
19 May 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thank you for your letter of 18 May. I am glad you are coming here on the 28th. That will give us at least two or three days together.

Owen Dixon,¹ the U.N. Mediator on Kashmir, is arriving here on the 27th evening. He has specially changed his programme to come here in time to see me before I go to Indonesia.

I am glad to say that Rajendra Babu is much better now.

I am exceedingly sorry that Matthai should feel discontented. I have written to him fully on the subject. I confess that I do not understand why he should feel in this way. I shall certainly see him. Indeed I invited him to dinner, but he was engaged.

I had a long talk with Chintaman Deshmukh tonight. I spoke quite frankly to him and told him what the position was and asked for his advice. I told him that we would be happy to have him as Finance Minister. He said that it would be a pity to break up in any way the Planning Commission, which was working as a team and which, he hoped, would show good results. This, not only in planning but in being a kind of an adjunct of the Cabinet, advising it on any matter its advice was sought. He felt happy with the work he was doing and felt that it was important. If he left the Commission or if Gaganvihari Mehta left it, it would mean a serious blow to it and that would be a pity.

He said that, in the circumstances, Gopalaswami Ayyangar would be a good choice. At my suggestion, he agreed to help the Finance Ministry in every way in regard to advice, more especially in regard to external finance. Indeed he said he had been doing that for some time past. He was now prepared to do it even more. I said that it would be a good thing if his connection with the Finance Ministry was formalised. Thus he

could be called Financial Adviser to the Ministry. That would be in addition to his work in the Planning Commission. He said that this would be very agreeable to him and would just suit him. In fact he was doing the same kind of work in the Planning Commission and he could easily give a good deal of time to the Finance Ministry.

About Rajaji's portfolio, he can of course have any portfolio of his choice. But the more I think of it, the more I feel that it would be eminently suitable for him to be what is called a Minister without Portfolio. That does not mean that he will not have specific work to do. I would suggest his being the Chairman of the Economic Committee. (At present I have put down the Prime Minister as Chairman.) This itself is a heavy and responsible work and this keeps one in touch with many activities in various Ministries. He could also be chairman of some other committees. He could deal with scientific research and Indo-Pak relations. There is no lack of work, and of important work.

Besides all this, I should like to associate him with the External Affairs Ministry in regard to all important matters. I agree with what you say about this. If later a regular portfolio is to be allotted to him, this will be quite easy.

Thank you for the information you have sent me about the problems of Travancore-Cochin.

I shall certainly have a talk with Commander Barnard on INS DELHI. I have got some definite views also on the subject of the type of armaments we should possess and I have recently been reading an important book that has come out in America on the subject.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter of 1

I am glad to know that Rajen had a talk with him this morning.

I hope Matthai's feelings are what you wrote to him and of you have had a talk already.

I had a letter from Rajaji who with his lung is still there and will His eyes are also not too good. (taken a journey, but in response to no alternative. I do hope he would comes there. I am somewhat apprehensive, the journey to Delhi might bring

As regards the Finance Minister cannot leave the Planning Commission talents would be available to us as we need not disturb him. At the same time I am not at all happy about giving his portfolio. It would be unwise of the Railway portfolio. I certainly thanam¹ is yet ripe for it, particularly Railway undertaking and finance a proposition which cannot be entrusted to administrators or Ministers. In addition sabotage, railway labour, etc., which I think it should be in safe and very experienced hands. It is only now that we have succeeded in restoring some order in the Railway administration. There is a reorganisation scheme which has to be put through. The railway system of the former Indian States has to be integrated and consolidated. All these are more necessary

¹Journalist; Member, Indian Railway Board; Chairman, Third Finance Commission

Executive Secretary, Railway Board

42; Minister of State for Railways, 1952-56; Pradesh, 1952-56;

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GUPTA (Shri Prakash), Tr.
Antriksha yoo-g-mahn sanchar.

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problems which, I think, have to be tackled skilfully and in an experienced way. Moreover, I feel that the Finance portfolio also should be held by someone who has been in touch with finance and the general business, industrial and financial life of the country. An administrator of whatever experience he might be and even general ability, will not do. Merely strengthening the advisory system and weakening the ministerial centre where responsibility must reside would not be adequate. We have also to look at the question from the point of view of public reactions, and in this, the reactions of those on whom Government must rely for its financial operations are also important. We have to consider this matter very carefully in the light of all these factors, and I do hope you will keep an open mind on this subject until we can meet and discuss.

About Rajaji's portfolio, the question is largely between you and him. I have given my views. We can discuss it further when we meet.

I have had a talk with Munshi about various matters. It seems to me that we shall have carefully to define the functions of the Planning Commission vis-a-vis the executive machinery of Government. We shall have to see that the Planning Commission does not become a clog in the machinery and confines itself to its proper sphere. I have noticed some tendency in the past, and recently also it appears some things have happened which give one the impression that a careful definition of relations is necessary if embarrasments as well as entanglements are to be avoided.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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60 Bazlullah Road
Tyagarayanagar
Madras
15 May 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I do not know what has happened to me. It is now 40 days since I started with severe inflammation in the eyes. Although it is now tolerable, there is still some remnant of mischief yet. I have had two relapses and I do not wish to have a third one.

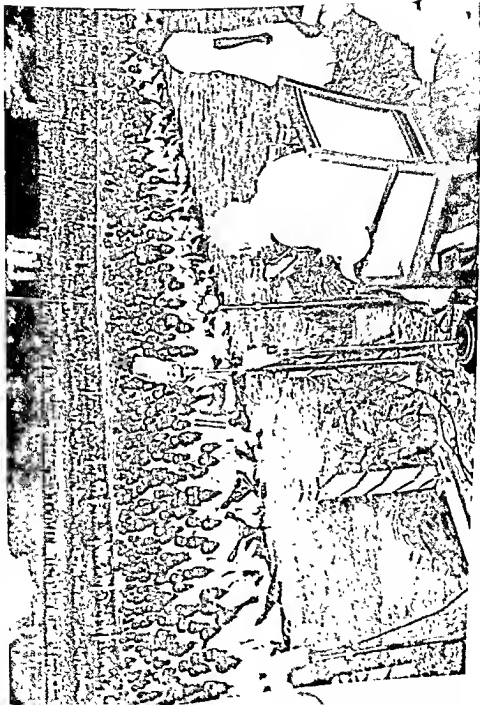
While driving on in this way in bed, four days ago a fever started with acute pain in the back. This developed next day into a congestion of the right lung. Fancy having this when I had continuous injections of Penicillin and the last one being the very day this lung trouble started. The stuff used was first-class and doctors efficient and devoted. I have now no fever since yesterday but a slight sound is still heard by the doctor at the base of the lung which he says will clear off in course of time.

Meanwhile, I am getting letters every day from poor Jawaharlalji about difficulties and developments. What a broken reed he has discovered to lean upon at this critical time! And you are away from Delhi at this moment. You know how in spite of everything he feels so lonely when you are not with him.

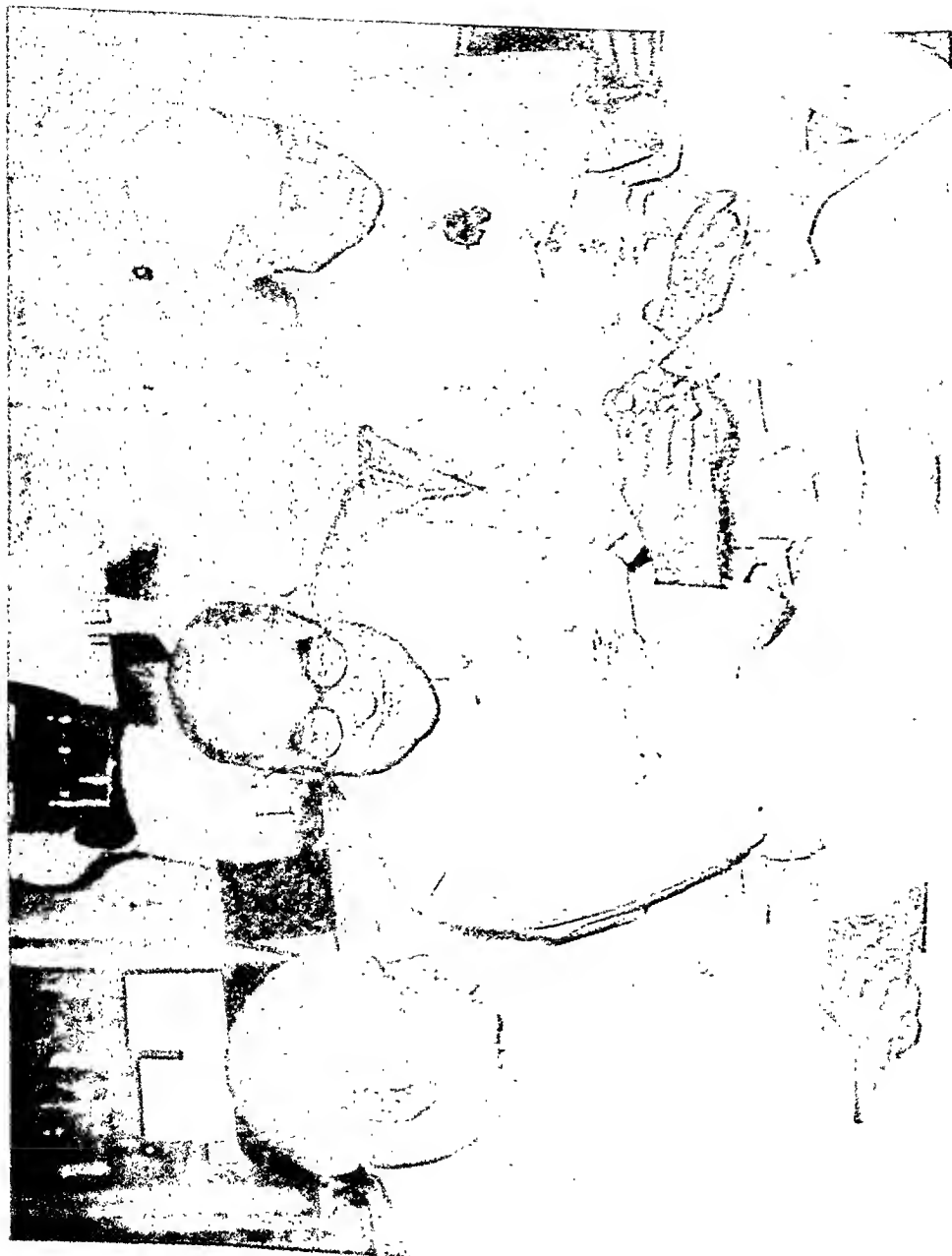
I have last written to him promising to be in Delhi about the 26th so that we might be together for a few days before he goes away on his Indonesia mission. I understand from him that it is not quite certain that you will be able to get back to Delhi a few days before he leaves. I hope you will try your best however to do this.

I know you have been having a feeling that to call Pantji to Delhi would look like a surrender to mischievous elements in UP. You have not been able to get over this in spite of every other consideration. If, therefore, Pantji feels incompetent in his modesty or when he puts forward the unfinished work in UP or the feeling of the members of the legislature as arguments against leaving his post in Lucknow, you are inclined to accept these relatively minor considerations. I agree with you however that if a man is persistently unwilling he will not do well, and it may not be good to compel him. But where are the men if we release those who would fill the place with dignity and efficiency? Some one of the members of the Planning Commission suitable for the job should be made Adviser to the Prime Minister and he should be in charge of the portfolio, practically on his own responsibility but in theory on behalf of the Prime Minister.

It is quixotic to think of me for this job. The Prime Minister has actually written to me seriously suggesting that I should take over Finance. When I was last in Delhi you disappointed me. I had expected you, frankly, to throw your commonsense in the scale against the proposal that I should join the Cabinet as Foreign Minister. Now that I have given my gentleman's promise to accept that portfolio the proposal comes that I should take over



SARDAR PATEL ADDRESSING A PUBLIC MEETING AT TRIVANDRUM, MAY 1950



PATIL AND NEHRU WITH LIAQUAT ALI KHAN, PAKISTAN PRIME MINISTER, DURING HIS VISIT TO
NEW DELHI WHICH RESULTED IN THE NEHRU-LIAQUAT PACT ON INDO-PAK DISPUTES
ESPECIALLY CONNECTED WITH REFUGEES FROM EAST BENGAL.

Finance, as Pantji will not agree. This demonstrates how one wrong step leads to another.

My name must be totally ruled out in connection with Finance. It will hardly be proper, even if I were able physically and willing.

You will somehow or other arrange matters after careful consideration in Delhi when you both meet again.

Yours affectionately,
C. Rajagopalachari

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

187

Madras
16 May 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Your letter from Trivandrum. Thank you very much. I wrote to you before I had your letter and have addressed it to the care of the Chief Secretary, Bombay.

I hope your travelling about has not caused any damage to your health and that you have returned in good condition.

I had fever again yesterday. The congestion in the lung is still not quite cleared.

Yours sincerely,
C. Rajagopalachari

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

188

Bombay
18 May 1950

My dear Rajaji,

I have received your two letters. I am sorry to note that you have had a setback. I do hope you will get over it fairly quickly and join us at Delhi. I feel that the present position of suspense had better be put a stop to as quickly as possible.

2. I received a letter from Jawaharlal in which he says that he has decided, in view of your reluctance, not to press you to accept the Finance portfolio. There is, therefore, nothing that remains to be done by me in that direction. I have told him that this is

the right thing to do and that he has done well in deciding not to force you to accept this portfolio.

3. I had to come away from Delhi partly in order to fulfil some long-standing engagements which could not have been put off until after the monsoon and partly because I needed some rest and change after a long period of extreme pressure on my time and energy. Liaquat Ali's visit to Delhi and my visit to Calcutta were particularly taxing. They would have taxed me even if I had my formal health. In my present state of health the pressure of work was even more exacting. However, I have been keeping in touch with Jawaharlal through correspondence except when I was on board the ship or went to Cochin and Travancore. I found a letter awaiting me when I returned and I am sending him a detailed reply.

4. My attitude in regard to Pantji's coming to Delhi was not based merely on the view that this would be a surrender to mischievous elements in UP but also on the reluctance of Pantji to come and his own diffidence about being able to do his best in this job. Had I been convinced that he would be able to fill the place adequately I might have got over the objection on the score of UP politics but I myself shared Pantji's diffidence.

5. On the question of Finance Minister, I feel that we cannot afford to experiment with the post. We must make up our minds once for all as to who should take it and ask him to take it up immediately. Already there is most unsettling speculation. The position is so delicate that we cannot afford to keep things in suspense and finance being so sensitive we cannot blame people if they feel upset over this element of uncertainty. I have suggested to Jawaharlal that he might draft either Deshmukh or Gaganvihari Mehta from the Planning Commission for this post. I have expressed my preference for Deshmukh.

6. I do hope you will get over your ailment fairly soon. I am feeling rather anxious and sometimes am really worried about your health, particularly because I do not view with equanimity the prospect of your coming to Delhi with any inflammation in your eyes. The Delhi weather with all its dust and duststorms at the present moment is bad for the eyes. At the same time, poor Jawaharlal is in a fix and the only way we can help him is by both of us going to Delhi and sharing with him his great burden and trying to solve his difficulties. It is a great pity that he took a final attitude with Matthai before being certain about his successor. Originally I was under the impression that Jawaharlal

[would] be leaving on 2 June. I had, therefore, decided to leave Bombay on the 30th or 31st. In view of what you say and also what Jawaharlal has written and the earlier date of his departure from Delhi, I have now decided to return there on the 28th morning.

7. I do hope your next letter will reassure me about your health.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri C. Rajagopalachari
Madras

189

Madras
20 May 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I was very glad to receive your helpful letter of the 18th instant. I guess that you have stood the strain of your southern tour and are back in fairly good health.

What is your programme after Jawaharlalji leaves for Indonesia? Do you stay on in Delhi, or is it your intention to move to a cooler place as some papers stated some time ago?

I have got over my ailments but I am still in a shattered condition and no one here would advise me to put any strain on my health at the present moment. The slight congestion in the lungs still persists and will probably take some time to disappear completely. I hope I shall be able to fly to Delhi about the 27th. This seems essential as you point out that we three should be together for a couple of days before the Prime Minister leaves for Indonesia.

At the same time it is next to impossible for me to arrange to go to Delhi now with my family and kit. If both of you are to be absent from Delhi for some weeks I wonder what use it is my staying there like a *fifth wheel detached from the coach*.

I should like to have a reply from you as to your programme after 31 May by the next post. Also please let me know by what plane you propose to fly from Bombay to Delhi and the probable time of taking off. I have not decided my own route. Night flying is cooler although the accommodation is not as comfortable as one would like. The last time I went to Delhi I flew via Bombay, halting at Bombay for a night. But I returned by the night plane from Delhi transhipping at Nagpur.

I understand that Rajen Babu also has decided to go to Simla. He appears to have got over the attack of nervous depression which followed the heavy injections which he had for his bronchitis. This means that neither President nor Prime Minister nor Deputy Prime Minister will be in Delhi for some weeks.

Yours affectionately,
C. Rajagopalachari

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

190

Bombay
22 May 1950

My dear Rajaji,

Thank you for your letter of 20 May 1950.

I am very glad to know that you have got over your ailments, but although I am anxious that you should be there before the Prime Minister leaves, I would not like you to do so at the cost of your health. That must be your first consideration. You have to get well quickly in order to be able to play your part as the Prime Minister would so much like you to.

I propose to go to Dehra Dun about 3 or 4 June. I am leaving Bombay on the 27th afternoon and will spend the night at Porbandar, where I am performing the opening ceremony of Gandhi Kirti Mandir and Kasturba Library. I shall leave Porbandar for Delhi early next morning and hope to reach Delhi by about 10 or 10.30. Had I been going straight from Bombay to Delhi, I would have asked you to come to Bombay and go with me, but in your present state of health I would not like to put you to so much strain.

I have not yet heard about Rajen Babu's programme to go to Simla, but the last time he wanted to go there he was taken ill. It is possible, therefore, that he is fulfilling that programme.

With affectionate regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri C. Rajagopalachari
Madras

MESSAGE FROM RAJAJI FOR SARDAR PATEL THROUGH PTI

I much appreciate your advice in your letter of the 22nd. Considering how I feel today, I think it is something of a risk if I go to Delhi as planned on Saturday night. After all, I must come back at once. It would be best if, as you say, I go after getting quite fit instead of risking another relapse. May I request you to advise Jawaharlalji immediately on these lines so that he may be at ease? I am writing to him today but I would like you to write to him. As you feel instinctively, I should not venture a journey now and it would help if you write.

SARDAR PATEL'S MESSAGE FOR MR. RAJAGOPALACHARI

24 May 1950

Have received your message. As desired by you, I am writing to Jawaharlal.

Bombay

24 May 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

I have just now received a message from Rajaji to the effect that, considering his present state of health, it would be something of a risk if he went to Delhi on Saturday night. He feels that he had better go to Delhi after getting quite fit instead of risking another relapse. As I wrote to you in my previous letter, I was myself rather apprehensive of his going to Delhi in his present delicate state of health and think that it would be best not to trouble him just now.

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

New Delhi
24 May 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thank you for your letter. I have had further talks with Chintaman Deshmukh and he has agreed to take up the Finance Ministry. He would like, however, to continue as a Member of the Planning Commission. Naturally he cannot give too much time to it. So this question of the Finance portfolio has at last been settled.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

Bombay
27 May 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter of 24 May which reached me yesterday morning. I do not know where it was held up, but as you must have learned from Satyanarayan Babu, the delay in its receipt rather embarrassed me, because in Bombay everybody knew about the appointment except myself. I am very glad indeed that Deshmukh has at last accepted the Finance Ministership. I am certain that he will be a valuable acquisition to the Cabinet and that, as Finance Minister, he will inspire all-round confidence. I feel his inclusion will definitely enhance the prestige of the Cabinet.

I am not happy about his continuing as Member of the Planning Commission. I do not think he can have time to do justice to both, and I feel that we should not depart from the principle that a Minister should not be on the Commission. However, we can think about it.

I have just now seen your programme of visiting Indonesia. It is a long and strenuous one, but I do hope that you will enjoy the sea trip, for as far as I can see, that is the only time

when you will get a well-earned rest. Otherwise, of course the change of surroundings will give you some relief.

I shall be reaching Delhi tomorrow morning. I think I should be there about 10 or 10.30. We could perhaps meet in the afternoon; any time after 3 will suit me.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

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New Delhi
27 May 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have today received a bunch of letters from you dated 20 May. Thank you for that. I shall write about them briefly because our time during the next few days is very limited.

First of all, I was surprised to learn from Satyanarayan that you did not receive my letter about Deshmukh's appointment before you heard the news through the radio. I spoke to Deshmukh on this subject again rather forcibly on the 24th. I told him that you, Rajaji, Gopalaswami, apart from others also, wanted him to be Finance Minister and he should accept this post. He said ultimately that he would like a day to think it over. The next afternoon at about 4 o'clock he told me finally that he will accept. That evening I wrote letters to the President, Rajaji and to you. I wanted to keep this matter completely secret and at the time I wrote the letters in my own handwriting. No one knew about it except Deshmukh and I. Later I told Gulzarilal Nanda because of the Planning Commission.

It was my intention to announce this on the 27th morning, as I think I wrote to you.

I was advised, however, by [N. R.] Pillai the next day that delay was not wise. I consulted the President and he agreed to an announcement that very evening.

I suppose my letter to you somehow missed your courier and got delayed. The other letters went by night mail and presumably reached their destination.

I am sorry that you have learnt this piece of news from the radio.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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Madras
27 May 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I hope by the time this reaches Delhi you will have arrived in good health and settled down once again in Aurangzeb Road. Truly, some evil eye has fallen on my health. My eyes today would not have permitted a journey, even if I had stuck to the programme. Your suggestion was most timely.

I am glad that the announcement of the appointment of Deshmukh has been received well in all circles. I am glad also it was announced promptly. The leakage started even on the 25th.

I suppose there was great enthusiasm in Porbandar.

Candidates are eagerly pressing forward for the by-elections to the Delhi Parliament. I suppose [R. K.] Shanmukham Chetty's¹ place must be allotted to me. This would be the natural thing to do. I spoke to Kamaraj when I saw him the other day. I suppose you will instruct him in regard to these by-elections. The seat occupied by Prater had better, I think, be given to Mr. Sudharisanam who is a fine patriotic type of Indian Christian of good standing. He is a Protestant and is a disciple of the late K. T. Paul.²

Yours affectionately,
C. Rajagopalachari

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

¹ President, Central Legislative Assembly, 1933-35; first Finance Minister of free India

² Secretary-General of Indian Christian Association for several years

New Delhi
30 May 1950

My dear Rajaji,

Many thanks for your letter dated 27 May which I received yesterday. I am glad that you are now rid of your lung trouble, but it seems the eyes are still not well. I hope the early rains in Madras will help them to get better soon. I am glad you did not come here. There is nothing much to be done and unnecessarily you would have run the risk.

I shall be writing to the Chief Minister, Madras, about your candidature in Shanmukham's vacancy, but as regards Prater's vacancy, in accordance with our policy, it will have to go to an Anglo-Indian. I shall consider Mr. Sudharisanam's name when the next opportunity occurs. He has written to me also. I shall be writing to the Chief Minister about this.

The Prime Minister is leaving tomorrow morning. I do not know if he has written to you about Mohanlal Saksena. He proposes to have him stationed in Bengal for about six weeks to report on refugee and rehabilitation work. Frankly, I do not like this arrangement and I said so to Jawaharlal, but he says he is committed to it and there the matter ends. It is obviously inappropriate for us to send to Bengal a man whose work in the Rehabilitation Ministry we have ourselves had occasion to find fault with.

I shall be leaving for Dehra Dun on the 4th morning and will be there until about the middle of July except for occasional visits to Delhi in connection with Cabinet meetings or other important business.

Yours affectionately,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri C. Rajagopalachari
Madras

Gandhinagar
Adyar
Madras

My dear Jawaharlalji,

Your letter of the 13th has been just read out to me. I am still unable to use my eyes and have to keep it practically shut all the time. Although our letters cross each other, there is no harm and may be there is advantage in our seeing how we have been thinking at either end. My letter to Sardar dated 13th instant which I asked you to see contains my biggest objection to your proposal and what you have written on the 13th covers many points else but not this. I hope you will see the points of my objection and not take it to be merely false prestige. It seems to me we shall lose much unless you give me an independent and higher position to work from instead of equating me with the Minister from Pakistan. You have to devise some definite scheme for utilising me in this work other than appointing me Minister in terms of the agreement. It is difficult for me to discuss the several points you have mentioned about Dr. [P. C.] Ghosh being appointed. I am clearly of opinion that to appoint Dr. [S. P.] Mookerjee would be a fatal blunder from the point of view of developing confidence and good feeling in Pakistan, both Government and people. I have a much higher opinion of Dr. Mookerjee's abilities and fairmindedness than probably any of you, but this job should not be started with an announcement of Dr. Mookerjee as India's representative under the agreement. Dr. B. C. Roy's objections or disinclinations should not stand in the way of Dr. Ghosh's being appointed to this place. Indeed he ought really to welcome it. Of course the Hindu Mahasabha and the Hindu communalists will not enthuse over Dr. Ghosh's appointment. But the spirit of the agreement requires the appointment of someone of the type to which these people are bound more or less to object. After all Dr. Ghosh is a Bengali and Bengalis would object more to a non-Bengali pro-agreementwalla.

If you and Sardar do not think of Dr. Ghosh as feasible, then you have to think of Mr. [K. C.] Neogy and not Dr. Syama

Prasad [Mookerjee]. All these comments of mine are on the basis that you consider my objections to my own name valid. I have no doubt in my mind on that point and I have also no doubt you can all put your heads together and devise a scheme for carrying out your intentions about me other than your present proposal.

As for alternative names, you may even consider Sri Prakasa for the place. He did well in Pakistan and he has held high office as Governor. You can easily find a very suitable man for the Governorship of Assam. I can at once suggest one or two names.

I have had a third injection of Penicillin which has done me much good.

Maulana's letter has just arrived. Kindly convey my greetings to him.

Yours affectionately,
C. Rajagopalachari

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

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New Delhi
27 May 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Some of the new Members of Cabinet have no seats in Parliament and they will have to be elected. These are: Rajaji, Sri Prakasa, Mahtab and Deshmukh.

There is Jairamdas's vacancy. I think he was elected in the Punjab.

Matthai intends to resign, but I think he should not resign and I am asking him not to do so. If Jairamdas's seat is filled by one of the new members of the Cabinet, three more seats would be required. I am merely writing this to you so that you may have it in mind.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

There are at present three vacancies in Parliament to be filled by election by the Madras Legislature, two of which are caused by the resignations of Shri Shanmukham Chetty and Mr. S. H. Prater, and the third by the ceasing of membership of the Rajah of Bobbili.

As suggested by you, for the vacancy of Shri Shanmukham Chetty, Shri Rajaji will be elected.

For the vacancy of Mr. S. H. Prater, Mr. Frank Anthony has suggested in his letter the name of Mr. [AET] Barrow. Of course that seat being one for Anglo-Indians, an Anglo-Indian alone should be chosen. But I only want to bring to your notice the feelings prevailing among us here that an Anglo-Indian of Madras might be chosen in preference to one outside Madras. But I have not yet consulted any Anglo-Indian here.

With regard to the third vacancy, I want to inform you of the convention in vogue here, that for vacancies arising in a particular linguistic region, candidates are chosen from that region alone. This is in practice all along. The third vacancy caused by the ceasing of membership of the Rajah of Bobbili being one pertaining to the Andhra area, the observance of the said convention would ordinarily require the choice of an Andhra for this vacancy.

Yours sincerely,
Kumaraswami Raja

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

I do not think we need worry very much. You can consult local opinion also before letting me have your suggestion.

As regards the third vacancy, I do not want to be a party to breaking the convention to which you have referred and would, therefore, prefer that an Andhra vacancy should go to an Andhra. Mr. Sudharisanam of the Guardian can wait for the time being. I see no other alternative.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri P. S. Kumaraswami Raja
Madras

206

Dehra Dun
8 June 1950

My dear Raja,

In an earlier letter I wrote to you about the vacancy caused by Prater's resignation and told you that the vacancy should go to an Anglo-Indian. In this connection, I am sending you herewith a copy of the letter which I have received from Frank Anthony. I should be glad to have your views as quickly as possible.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri P. Kumaraswami Raja
Madras

ENCLOSURE

191 Civil Lines
Jubbulpore
30 May 1950

My dear Sardar Patel,

I address you, once again, with the earnest request that you will be kind enough to use your good offices to have Mr. Barrow returned from the Madras Legislature to Parliament in place of Prater who has resigned his seat.

I wrote to you on 22 April and enclose a copy of my letter in which I gave full details showing that Mr. Barrow had received the unanimous

New Delhi
28 May 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Last night I wrote to you about Matthai's membership of Parliament. I had wanted him to stay on as a member and not to resign from that. He writes to me however that he has decided to resign and in fact has sent in his resignation as from 1 June. If this resignation goes, then there will be two vacancies, Matthai's and Jairamdas's. I do not know in which States these vacancies occur.

Of the new Ministers, there are really only three who have not got seats, Sri Prakasa, Mahtab and Deshmukh.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

New Delhi
28 May 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter of 28 May 1950 about Matthai's membership of Parliament.

I am sorry that he has not been able to reconsider his decision to resign, but, in view of that decision, I think the best course would be for Deshmukh to stand from Punjab from which province Jairamdas was formerly elected.

Sri Prakasa should, in my opinion, stand in Matthai's vacancy, since he was elected from the UP and it would be only fitting that Sri Prakasa should be elected from that State.

As regards Mahtab, I think it would be best to create a vacancy in Orissa. This could be arranged by Mahtab with the Parliamentary Board in Orissa, unless you would like to take the initiative and decision in the matter as to which member from

Orissa should go. I understand there is a vacancy in West Bengal also. I will see to these matters.

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister
New Delhi

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New Delhi
31 May 1950

My dear Raja,

As you know, we have appointed Rajaji as Minister in the Central Cabinet and we shall have to find a seat for him for election to Parliament. Shanmukham Chetty's vacancy has arisen and I suggest that you have him elected in that vacancy. I have received a letter from Mr. Sudharisanam of the Guardian. I have had recommendation about him from other distinguished persons also. I do not know what you think of him, but from what I have heard, he would seem to be a suitable man. But for the present there is no vacancy. There is Prater's vacancy but that must go to an Anglo-Indian. I believe Frank Anthony¹ has already written to you about a suitable successor to Prater. Please let me know what you think of it.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri Kumaraswami Raja
Chief Minister
Madras

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EXTRACT

Madras
7 June 1950

Dear Sardarji,

I am in receipt of your kind letter dated 31 May 1950 and the copy of the letter to you by Mr. Frank Anthony.

¹ President, Anglo-Indian Association; India's representative to Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference, 1948; member of CA; nominated member of Lok Sabha since independence

support of the All-India Anglo-Indian Association, its branches in the Madras Presidency and also of the Anglo-Indian representatives in the Madras Legislature.

Thanking you and with my best wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Frank Anthony

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai J. Patel
New Delhi

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Camp Doon Court
Dehra Dun
8 June 1950

My dear Anthony,

Thank you for your letter of 30 May 1950.

I have already written to the Madras Chief Minister about Prater's vacancy and am writing to him again.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Frank Anthony, Esq., MP
191 Civil Lines
Jubbulpore

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EXTRACT

Madras
15 July 1950

Dear Sardarji,

With regard to the putting up, for Mr. Prater's vacancy in Parliament, of an Anglo-Indian to be elected by the Madras Legislature, you asked me in your letter, dated 10 June 1950 to let you know the name of any local Anglo-Indian suitable for membership in that vacancy. I have already brought to your notice the feeling prevailing among us here to choose a local Anglo-Indian instead of an outsider.

Ever since the receipt of your letter, I was in the look out for a proper candidate among the Anglo-Indians. Casually, I had a discussion about it with Shri C. Rajagopalachari, in the course of which he suggested the name of one Mr. G. V. Roge as the proper candidate.

However, I leave the matter for your decision.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
P. S. Kumaraswami Raja

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

209

New Delhi
20 July 1950

My dear Raja,

Thank you for your letter of 15 July 1950.

I have written to [Frank] Anthony about Mr. Roge and shall write to you again after hearing from him.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri P. S. Kumaraswami Raja
Madras

210

1 York Place
New Delhi
19 July 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have received a copy of the communication sent by the Chief Minister of Madras to you in regard to Mr. Prater's vacancy in Parliament. He has found Mr. G. V. Roge to be a suitable and willing candidate. Mr. Raja has exaggerated my approval of Mr. Roge. I suggested his name as a good choice, but did not press more than that. However, I see from Mr. Roge's letter to the Chief Minister that he is occupying responsible positions and is trusted by his community and also that

S C.-X.19

he is loyal to Mr. Anthony. It is left to you to decide. I feel that the Anglo-Indians who are a large community in the South would be glad if you chose one of them.

Yours sincerely,
C. Rajagopalachar

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

211

New Delhi
20 July 1950

My dear Rajaji,

Thank you for your letter of 19 July 1950 regarding Mr. Prater's vacancy in Parliament. I have written to Anthony suggesting Mr. Roge's candidature. Mr. Roge has himself said that he would not like to stand in opposition to Mr. Anthony's wishes. Let me see what Anthony says.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri C. Rajagopalachari
Minister Without Portfolio
New Delhi

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Madras
25 July 1950

Dear Sardarji,

Your letter of the 20th instant is duly to hand. Thank you for the same. Before I got your letter, I received another letter from Mr. Frank Anthony dated 18 July, a copy of which is enclosed herewith for your perusal. The Congress Legislature Party is going to meet on 1 August to adopt candidates for the Central Parliament to be elected by the Madras Legislature. I would be thankful if you can write to me on the matter earlier.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
P. S. Kumaraswami Raja

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

New Delhi
29 July 1950

My dear Raja,

Thank you for your letter of 25 July 1950.

I have had a talk with Anthony also. The Association is interested in getting the best man to represent the Anglo-Indian community and they feel that, if they confined themselves to local considerations, they would not succeed in their objective. There is a great deal to be said for this point of view and on the whole I think you might have Mr. A. E. T. Barrow returned to fill the seat in Parliament vacated by Mr. Prater.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri P. S. Kumaraswami Raja
Madras

New Delhi
29 July 1950

My dear Anthony,

Thank you for your letter of 27 July.

2. I have already written to Kumaraswami Raja about selecting Mr. Barrow. I shall write to you again when I hear from him in reply.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Frank Anthony Esq.
Chairman
All-India Anglo-Indian Association
New Delhi

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TELEGRAM

Madras
31 July 1950

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

PARTY MEETING CONVENED TOMORROW. AWAITING YOUR DIRECTION
REGARDING ADOPTION OF CANDIDATE FOR ANGLOINDIAN VACANCY
IN PARLIAMENT.

CHIEF MINISTER MADRAS

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TELEGRAM

Chief Minister
Madras

1 August 1950

YOUR TELEGRAM OF THIRTYFIRST. HAVE ALREADY REPLIED SUG-
GESTING THAT BARROW MAY BE NOMINATED. ASSOCIATION WANTS
BEST MAN AND IF WE INSIST ON LOCAL CONSIDERATIONS THIS WOULD
NOT BE POSSIBLE.

VALLABHBHAI

217

New Delhi
25 July 1950

My dear Gopalaswami,

I am sending herewith a copy of the note which I have
sent to the Cabinet Secretariat on the position of Deputy Mini-
sters and Ministers of State.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri Gopalaswami Ayyangar
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

New Delhi
25 July 1950

Reference Cabinet Secretariat Memorandum No. 295/GF/47, dated 24 July 1950.

I have carefully read the note recorded by the Prime Minister and the note received from the High Commissioner for India in London on the composition of the Cabinet in the United Kingdom.

I do not think that the analogy holds with the UK. We do not have such fine distinction between one Minister and another as has been established according to the UK practice. In fact what I find is that our grouping of Ministers is different. Under the term "Minister of State" we have really included both Ministers in charge of departments and Ministers of State who assist other Ministers in departmental duties. The Ministers of State for Parliamentary Affairs, for Information and Broadcasting, for Relief and Rehabilitation and for Minorities are all independently in charge of their departments. They do not assist other Ministers in departmental duties, except in a sense that the Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs also assists the Prime Minister in his parliamentary duties. The only Minister who assists other Ministers in departmental duties is the Hon'ble Minister of State for Railways. As regards Deputy Ministers, I find that their functions are entirely those of the Parliamentary Secretaries. They represent their respective Ministers in Parliament during their absence. They also discharge parliamentary duties even when they are present. In addition, they assist their respective Ministers in the discharge of departmental duties. They are not like Ministers of State entitled to see Cabinet papers. They do not receive them as of right and they see these papers only at the discretion of their Ministers. The Deputy Ministers do not share the collective responsibility of the Government. If, therefore, the term "Deputy Ministers" is to be avoided, they can only be called "Parliamentary Secretaries." I do not know how far they will relish this terminology.

V. J. Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
Cabinet Secretary

New Delhi
25 July 1950

My dear Sardarji,

Thank you very much for your letter dated today enclosing a copy of the note you have sent to the Cabinet Secretariat about the status of Deputy Ministers and Ministers of State.

2. I agree that we cannot follow the British analogy in entirety. Even there, I doubt, if the distinctions between classes of Ministers are really so fine and so definite as the High Commissioner's note appears to make out.

3. I would only observe in passing that it might not be accurate to say that our two Deputy Ministers are performing the functions only of the Parliamentary Secretaries. I believe Khurshed Lal functions in the Communications Ministry practically in the same manner as Santhanam does in my Ministry. I rather think that Khurshed Lal's functions in the Communications Ministry cover a much wider sphere than Santhanam's in the Railways Ministry. We are only feeling our way and it would perhaps not be so desirable to stereotype in definite terms the kind of work that each class of Minister other than Cabinet Minister may do in our set-up.

4. I am, however, clear, as I had contended all along, that Deputy Ministers should be treated as Members of the Council of Ministers and should be appointed by the President and not by the Prime Minister. This appears to me to be inescapable so long as these men are appointed to any category of Ministers under our Constitution and they are drawn from Members of Parliament.

5. The High Commissioner, however, refers to two points which seem to require some comment:

(a) According to him, in strict constitutional theory, Parliamentary Secretaries are appointed by the Departmental Minister whom they assist. In practice they are selected by the Prime Minister, and their appointments formally submitted to the King as a matter of courtesy.

(b) He also states that collective responsibility does not extend to junior Ministers including Parliamentary Secretaries.

I do not know what the High Commissioner's authority for these statements is. From my letter to the Prime Minister dated 21st inst. [See Enclosure I] you will notice that in law Parliamentary Secretaries and Parliamentary Under Secretaries in England are included in the category of junior Ministers and it is clear that the King has to accord his approval to appointments of all junior Ministers, just as he accords his approval for the appointment of other Ministers or persons recommended by the Prime Minister.

As regards collective responsibility, there is no statutory enunciation of it in England so far as I know. It is a matter of constitutional convention. In constitutional literature, collective responsibility has nearly always been referred to as attaching to the Cabinet. Apparently when the Cabinet became unwieldy in size and only some of the Members are called to meetings of the Cabinet, it is now the case that in ordinary parlance collective responsibility is spoken of as attaching also to Ministers of Cabinet rank but not in the Cabinet.

6. I cannot, however, recollect there being any constitutional warrant for all this. Junior Ministers cannot be held to be exempt from collective responsibility. If Mr. Attlee's Cabinet or Ministry—whatever you like to call it—resigns, it cannot be that Ministers in Cabinet and those of Cabinet rank but not in Cabinet alone are expected to resign, while the host of other people who are junior Ministers can continue to retain their offices. Such a thing seems to me unthinkable in the working of the British Constitution.

7. So far as we are concerned, we are governed by a written Constitution. Every Minister has to be appointed by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister. The Council of Ministers is collectively responsible to Parliament. Once a man is appointed a Minister of the Union—whatever grade of Minister he may be appointed to—he becomes a member of the Council of Ministers and collective responsibility attaches to him as to every other Minister.

8. As you have sent a copy of your note to me, I think, I should send you for information copies of the correspondence that has passed between me and the Prime Minister since the last Cabinet meeting.

Yours sincerely,
N. Gopalaswami

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE I

New Delhi
21 July 1950

My dear Jawaharlalji,

In the course of the discussions in Cabinet yesterday on the status of Deputy Ministers, it was suggested that the position in the UK might be ascertained.

2. When Shanmukham Chetty was proceeding to England in May 1948, I asked him to study the constitution of the Cabinet there and the procedure that was being followed for disposing of Cabinet work. I believe you also wrote to him in that connection. He sent me a memorandum on the working of the Cabinet system on his return. He had contacted both Ministers and Cabinet officers there before this memorandum was drawn up.

3. According to this memorandum, Ministers in the UK are, besides law officers, divided into three categories:

- (a) Cabinet Ministers;
- (b) Ministers of Cabinet rank, but not Members of the Cabinet; and
- (c) Junior Ministers not of Cabinet rank.

The number of Cabinet Ministers then was 17, the number of Ministers of Cabinet rank but not in the Cabinet 16, and the number of junior Ministers was 37 besides 4 law officers. The whole lot of them, exceeding 70, are Ministers of the Crown. "Apart from the joint responsibility of the Cabinet, every Minister is considered as individually and personally responsible and answerable to Parliament for all his actions."

4. I have looked also into the Ministers of the Crown Act, 1937, enacted by the British Parliament. This prescribes the salaries and pensions of the different classes of Ministers and their capacity to sit in the House of Commons. The Act deals with all the Ministers who come under the descriptions referred to above, whatever their actual designations may be. I mention this only to show that a Parliamentary Secretary, a Parliamentary Under Secretary including even such a person as an Assistant Post-Master General is treated as a Minister of the Crown.

London Times dated 5 July 1950 which shows that the King's approval was obtained for the appointment of Mr. D. R. Rees-Williams as Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Commonwealth Relations Office—which is a junior Ministership.

6. Sections 4, 5 and 6 of the Ministers of the Crown Act have something to say about pensions. But the pensions referred to are pensions for persons who have held political offices. Under Section 4, the Prime Minister, and the First Lord of the Treasury, is entitled to an annual pension of £ 2,000 from the moment he has taken the oath of office. But this pension is not payable to any person so long as he is in receipt of any pension under the Political Offices Pension Act, 1869, or any salary payable out of moneys provided by Parliament etc. Under Section 5, the Leader of the Opposition is entitled to an annual salary of £ 2,000, but this salary is not payable to him if he is in receipt of a pension payable under the Ministers of the Crown Act, and, if he is in receipt of a pension under the Political Offices Pension Act, the salary payable to him as Leader of the Opposition shall be reduced by an amount equal to the amount of that pension. Section 6 says that no person in receipt of a salary or pension under the Ministers of the Crown Act shall be entitled to receive any sum out of moneys provided by Parliament by way of salary or allowance in respect of his membership of the House of Commons.

7. There is no reference in this Parliamentary enactment to the salary payable under it to a Minister of the Crown being reduced by the amount of any pension which, for services rendered by him as a permanent civil servant, he has been drawing.

8. Perhaps the Cabinet Secretary might make further researches into this matter.

Yours sincerely,

N Gopalaswami [Ayyangar]

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister

ENCLOSURE II

New Delhi
22 July 1950

My dear Gopalaswami,

Your letter of 21 July. The ordinance we have passed about the salaries of Ministers will be brought up in the shape of a Bill at the next session of Parliament. Perhaps if you have any specific proposals on this

subject, we might consider them soon in Cabinet. Could you give thought to this matter?

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

The Hon'ble Shri N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar
Minister for Transport & Railways
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE III

New Delhi
22 July 1950

My dear Jawaharlalji,

With reference to your letter of date regarding the status of Deputy Ministers, I have already said that Deputy Ministers should be treated as Members of the Council of Ministers under the Constitution. If this view is accepted, the Salaries of Ministers Act, 1947, as amended by Ordinance No. XX of 1950, will require further amendment on the lines indicated in the enclosure. If Cabinet agrees, it should be directed that the Bill in contemplation should be amended on these lines before it is introduced in Parliament.

Yours sincerely,
N. Gopalaswami

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister
New Delhi

SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS

1. The reference to "Deputy Minister" in the long title and preamble as well as in sub-section (1) of section 1 of the Act should be omitted.
2. For clause (a) of section 2, the following should be substituted:
"a. "Minister" means a member of the Council of Ministers of the Union, whether designated a Cabinet Minister or a Minister of State or a Deputy Minister."
3. Clause (aa) of section 2 should be omitted.
4. For section 3 of the Act, the following should be substituted:
"With effect from the date on which this Act comes into force there shall be paid to each Cabinet Minister or Minister of State a salary of Rs. 3,000 per mensem, and to each Deputy Minister a salary of Rs. 2,000 per mensem."

140 Constitution House
New Delhi
7 April 1950

My dear Sardarji,

A few days ago I brought to your notice the fact that the official list of Members of Parliament shows four vacancies among the seats allotted to the Punjab. You then promised to look into the matter. I shall be grateful if you will kindly let me know when the vacancies, assuming that they have been correctly shown, will be filled.

Yours sincerely,
H. V. Kamath¹

New Delhi
9 April 1950

My dear Kamath,

Thank you for your letter of 7 April.

The question of filling vacancies from Punjab does not concern me. I was only concerned with Part B States and I find that the only vacancies to be filled are in Madhya Bharat and Rajasthan. We are taking steps to do so as quickly as possible.

As regards Punjab, however, I have had enquiries made and am informed that these are really surplus vacancies rendered surplus on account of the shift of population during the last disturbances. On the basis of population, it is not necessary to fill these vacancies and, therefore, they have been allowed to remain unfilled.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri H. V. Kamath
Member of Parliament
New Delhi

¹Joined ICS in London, 1929; resigned 1938 to join freedom movement; later joined Forward Bloc; member, CA, 1940; elected to Lok Sabha on PSP ticket in 1955 and 1962; member, Administrative Reforms Commission

New Delhi
9 April 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

You will recall that when the question came up about granting exemptions to Members of Parliament from disqualification on account of holding an office of profit under the Government the question arose about their holding office as members of various committees, boards, etc., appointed by Government. The view then was that the Law Minister would consider this question and bring in, if necessary, a subsequent Bill and an act of indemnity to safeguard those Members who have continued on these various committees and boards. The problem, as far as I know, has not yet been tackled and I think it is not wise to leave it as it is until Parliament meets next. I would, therefore, suggest that the whole question should be considered carefully and necessary legislation brought before Parliament before the session ends. I would myself suggest that we exempt all those who were on the date of the expiry of our ordinance members of various committees, boards, etc., and as for the future we might exempt those who might be appointed as members by Government with the consent of the Speaker. This would severely restrict the number of members who would be getting such exemptions and the Speaker could be depended upon to safeguard against the abuse of this power or converting this into patronage by the executive Government.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister
New Delhi

New Delhi
9 April 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Your letter of 9 April. I agree with you that this matter of disqualification of Members of Parliament should not be left vague. If you like, we can have legislation. I fear, however, that it would be difficult to get any additional legislation through during this session. Probably any such legislation will give rise to long discussion in the House and all kinds of amendments might be moved. Would it be possible to have an ordinance after the session ends and then get this converted into an Act of Parliament during the next session? In any event, the question should be immediately examined.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

New Delhi
10 April 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter dated 9 April 1950 regarding the disqualification of Members of Parliament.

I do not think that an ordinance would be an appropriate method of dealing with this question. The Law Minister has already told the members of the party and probably made a statement in Parliament also that this question will be examined and, if necessary, dealt with by suitable legislation at a later date. Apart from this, I do not think we can relate this to any emergency. After all, the position is that when we pushed through our Bill on the subject last month, we said we would examine the position and bring in legislation if necessary at a later date. We might therefore make ourselves liable to criticism on the ground that we deliberately wanted to avoid Parliament in a matter in which

it was primarily concerned. On the whole, therefore, it would be best to have legislation, even if it means extending the session by a day or two.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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15 Parliament House
New Delhi
15 April 1950

My dear Sardar Sahib,

A copy of the correspondence that passed between you and the Hon'ble the Prime Minister on the subject of granting exemption to Members of Parliament from disqualification on account of holding an office of profit under the Government was forwarded by me to the Hon'ble Dr. B. R. Ambedkar¹ on 11 April 1950. I have received a reply from him and I enclose a copy of his letter dated 14 April 1950 stating that it will not be possible to bring forward the Bill during the remaining few days of the session.

Yours sincerely,
S. N. Sinha²

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

¹ Professor of Economics, Bombay; called to Bar, 1923; member, RTC, 1930-32; member, Viceroy's Executive Council, July 1942-June 1946; member, CA; Law Minister in Nehru Cabinet

² MLA (Bihar) 1926; MLA (Central), 1934; Congress Whip, 1937-39 and again in 1945; Chief Whip and Minister for Parliamentary Affairs for two decades; presently Governor of Madhya Pradesh

ENCLOSURE

25 Parliament House
New Delhi
14 April 1950

My dear Sinha,

Your letter of 11 April. I am afraid it is quite impossible to bring forward another Bill before Parliament during the remaining few days of this session in order to safeguard those members of Parliament who have continued on various committees and boards set up by Government. The question requires further careful consideration for which I shall have no time, especially in view of the necessity to get the Representation of the People Bill through during this session and in view of my preoccupation with the informal conference on the Hindu Code Bill which I have called for the 20th. Nor do I see any great urgency for this measure. In spite of the discussion in Parliament early in March on the Prevention of Disqualification Bill no specific question has been raised by any one that particular members of Parliament have incurred the disqualification by reason of their being members of such committees or boards.

Yours sincerely,
B. R. Ambedkar

The Hon'ble Shri S. N. Sinha
Parliament House
New Delhi

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Dehra Dun
20 April 1950

My dear Rajen Babu,

I understand from Mishraji [D. P. Mishra] that you discussed with him the question of *Christian element amongst the tribes* being treated as non-tribes. I myself was rather sympathetic to this point of view, but when I considered all the implications and aspects involved, I saw no alternative except to recognise that conversion should not affect tribal status. Tribal religion is, as you know, being treated separately from Hinduism, and,

if we have a provision of that kind, their conversion to Hinduism would also be affected. It would, of course, be almost impossible to accept discrimination against only one religion. The State Governments who were consulted have all, with the exception of Bihar, accepted this point of view. Bihar also would like to limit it to a particular area and not over the whole of Bihar. If you would like to know more in detail about this particular, you might send for R. A. Gopalaswami, our Registrar-General and Census Commissioner, who is dealing with this particular matter. I have told him today that, on your summons, he should see you and explain the whole thing.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Dr. Rajendra Prasad
President
New Delhi

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New Delhi
7 June 1950

Dear Vallabhbhai,

I enclose herewith a note prepared by my office on the introduction of a messenger service within the Parliament Chamber from the next session of Parliament. As the scheme involves a change in the present practice, I am sending it to you for having your reactions.

I trust you will agree that the present system detracts from the decorum, dignity and solemnity of the proceedings and requires improvement. If you concur with the main proposals, I shall take further action in the matter.

Yours sincerely,
G. V. Mavalankar

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Dehra Dun

Dehra Dun
4 July 1950

My dear Dada Sahib,

Please refer to your letter of 7 June 1950, with which you forwarded to me the enclosed papers (which I am returning herewith).

We had a discussion about this when you were here, and it was agreed that the best course would be to train up the jamadars and peons of the staffs of Hon'ble Ministers, rather than recruit a new force of peons. There is already a plethora of peons and a new messenger service would, in my judgment, be an avoidable burden on the exchequer.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri G. V. Mavalankar
Maharashtra Society
Ellis Bridge
Ahmedabad

New Delhi
26 July 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I enclose a rough draft for the President's Address to Parliament. I should be grateful if you will kindly send me any suggestions in regard to it.

Various Ministries suggested to me the inclusion of a number of items in the Address. I feel, however, that the Address should be as short as is possible and should not be burdened with details.

Please treat this draft as top secret.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

New Delhi
28 July 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I enclose a revised draft of the President's Address. I have left out one or two paragraphs and have made various other corrections.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

EXTRACTS FROM THE REVISED DRAFT OF THE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS TO PARLIAMENT

Members of Parliament,

Honourable Members will recall that, last February, an agreement was reached between the Governments of India, Pakistan and the Union of South Africa to hold, at a later date in the course of this year, a conference for the discussion of the Indian problem in South Africa. This agreement presupposed that nothing would occur between the preliminary conference held in February and the main conference to vitiate the atmosphere for a friendly adjustment. Unfortunately, this expectation has not been fulfilled. The administration of existing oppressive laws, applicable to the Indian community in South Africa, has been tightened, and the enactment of the Group Areas Law has reaffirmed and extended the application of the Union Government's policy of segregation, to which the Government of India have consistently and firmly objected over a period of nearly seventy years. My Government, therefore, decided that no useful purpose would be served by their participation in the conference which the Union Government had proposed should be held early this autumn. They feel that the subject must again be raised in the United Nations and have asked for its inclusion in the agenda of the General Assembly of the Organisation, which is due to meet in New York in September.

Honourable Members are aware that the economic situation in the country has been a matter of constant concern to my Government. With a view to formulating a plan for the balanced development of the productive resources of the country and thus ensuring the maximum possible social and economic

progress, a Planning Commission has been established, which is applying itself with ability and earnestness to its work. The prevailing crises and complexities in international affairs add greatly to the difficulties of the economic situation. The new threat to world peace, which affects every country, has potentialities of grave import to our economy. The situation calls for constant vigilance and examination of measures likely to assist in holding the price level. The greatest economy has to be practised in all departments of Government and restraint in spending exercised by the public.

The food situation continues to be given the highest priority by my Government. The overall position in regard to it shows considerable improvement. There has been record procurement of wheat in the rabi areas. This, coupled with imports, for which arrangements have already been made, will place an adequate quantity of wheat at our disposal. As regards rice, however, the procurement in certain areas has not been satisfactory. In some States, notably Madras, West Bengal and Bihar, difficulties have arisen and these have been added to by natural disasters and by the influx of large numbers of migrants. Government are taking every step to prevent the development of any serious situation, partly by its supply of wheat and millets and partly by importing rice. My Government are determined to overcome all these difficulties and are confident of the success of the programme that has been laid down to make India self-sufficient in regard to food by the end of 1951.

Considerable progress has been made in the rehabilitation of displaced persons. But a great deal remains to be done and large numbers of these refugees are undergoing privation and suffering. As the problem was being brought under control in the North, a large and continuing influx of migrants in Bengal, Assam and Tripura upset previous calculations and added greatly to its complexity and magnitude. This problem can only be handled effectively on an all-India basis and with the co-operation of all States.

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New Delhi
30 July 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter dated 28 July 1950.

I have no suggestions to make in the revised draft of the President's Address which you sent me except that a small para should be inserted about the formation of the new Cabinet.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister
New Delhi

CHAPTER X
IN THE CAUSE OF SWADESHI

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TELEGRAM

New Delhi
13/14 May 1950

Hon. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
Trivandrum

ASSUMED OFFICE TODAY. PRAY GOD GIVE ME ENERGY TO FULFIL YOUR
EXPECTATIONS.

MAHTAB

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Malabar Hill
Bombay
20 May 1950

My dear Mahtab,

I received your telegram on the assumption of your office. Many thanks for the same. I was then in Travancore and, therefore, could not write back to you.

I am really very glad that you have joined us at the Centre and you have succeeded in taking over the Industry & Supply portfolio. I do hope you will bring to bear upon the problems of this Ministry the same practical and commonsense approach as you displayed so successfully in Orissa. What is required is a balanced and enlightened view of the many difficulties with which we are faced in the field of industrialisation and an intelligent understanding and appreciation of the difficulties of the business community. I have no doubt that you will look at the problems in this way and that you will make a success of your job. Whenever you wish to consult me on any issue, you can do so without reserve and my advice will be at your disposal.

Your loss to Orissa is undoubtedly great, and I was on that account rather reluctant to disturb you. You have done wonderfully well there both administratively and organisationally and I am sure we shall all profit from your experience of affairs in that State.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri Harekrushna Malitab
Minister for Industry & Supply
Government of India
New Delhi

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New Delhi
18 June 1950

Revered Sardarji,

I am sending herewith a copy of the letter which I have addressed to the Planning Commission. I think we should go ahead with some programme. As soon as we take up the programme of stopping imports of consumer goods within a given period, I think we can create the necessary enthusiasm in the country. I am inclined to think that the spirit of swadeshi is being gradually killed by allowing imports of all kinds. In order to give effect to the swadeshi programme, we will have to cry a halt to the talk of socialisation and nationalisation which has been going on for the last several years. Now I am studying a significant declaration of Mao Tse-tung, the President of the Chinese Republic, who has been accepted now as one of the greatest exponents of Communism. Mao Tse-tung says that "the relation between the public and private industries should now be improved as there is no possibility of early liquidation of capitalism." Unless we take a practical step like this, not only industry and agriculture will not prosper but the State itself will be in danger.

In this connection I cannot but remember the days when sacrifice in the cause of swadeshi was rousing enthusiasm amongst the people. Even today if we place the programme of swadeshi before the country and call upon the people to sacrifice, there will be enthusiasm and support all round. If you generally agree

with this view, then I will proceed with it systematically and steadily.

Yours sincerely,
H. Mahtab

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
Dehra Dun

ENCLOSURE

18 June 1950

My dear Shri Nanda,

It appears it will take a pretty long time to draw up any detailed plan of the development programme of the country. But I wonder if a rough outline cannot be drawn up immediately now. It occurs to me that we can proceed from the point of view of self-sufficiency straightaway. Attempts may be made now to manufacture those articles which are now being imported from other countries. Situated as India is, necessarily all developments must centre round agriculture. Leaving aside food, which must be grown in this country, those articles which are required for agricultural purposes and for meeting the essential needs of the agriculturists should be manufactured in this country. As to which articles require to be manufactured as early as possible in India, it can be easily ascertained from our import statistics. This will cover a good ground to start with. We can draw up the list of industries which should be started as early as possible. For these industries, some basic industries perhaps will be necessary, such as steel. Even in the present financial circumstances I do not consider it an insurmountable difficulty to make a beginning of all these industries in a determined manner.

I think we must take a practical view of the situation and should not leave it ourselves to particular types of industries. It is not possible today to eliminate private industries. There is no use of calculating as to when private capitalism will be eliminated. To start with we may perhaps invite private people to start industries according to plan and render them necessary help and assistance. It would be worthwhile for Government, either Central or provincial, to participate in these industries to some extent financially. If this policy is accepted, we have to relate all our laws and reforms to it. If you and your colleagues on the Planning Commission generally agree with this view, I may start with the work immediately and take steps to see that imports of essential goods are completely stopped within a given period.

It will be necessary also to call upon the people to put up with a little inconvenience in order to carry out this programme. I am sure if we make

up our mind here, we can persuade the people to undergo the inconvenience necessary for the purpose.

Will you please consult with your colleagues and let me know your views as early as possible ?

Yours sincerely,
H. Mahtab

Shri Gulzarilal Nanda
Deputy Chairman
Planning Commission
New Delhi

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Dehra Dun
4 July 1950

My dear Mahtab,

I received your letter dated 18 June 1950 regarding stoppage of imports of consumer goods. I refrained from replying to it earlier as I thought the matter required fuller consideration than seems to have been given by you or would have been possible if I were in a hurry to reply.

2. The whole question requires careful planning. In the first place, we have to find out what consumer goods are being produced in India and in what quantities; whether the existing production can meet indigenous demand; and if not, whether production is capable of being raised to the required figure. To the extent to which enquiries reveal that a particular commodity or article is being produced in India, of a reasonable quality, we might be justified in shutting down imports, but beyond this it would not be possible to go.

3. The next category is of articles which might be produced in India, if business enterprise could be enlisted and necessary facilities etc. could be granted. In respect of this category, we should go all out to evolve plans for development and ensure that, within a reasonable time, production of these articles is taken in hand. It is only when production comes about that the question of stoppage of imports could be considered.

4. The third category would be of articles which are essential and which cannot be produced in the country within a reasonable time. I do not think we would gain anything by cutting down this category of imports except as an emergency measure in order to balance our exchange position.

5. Along with these, we shall have to make sure that the indigenous goods which we are thus protecting are of the right quality. This applies, in particular, to articles of human consumption, such as drugs, tinned food, nutritious substances etc. We shall have to have standard laboratories for testing these articles and prescribe heavy punishment for adulteration or spurious articles.

6. We shall also have to consider whether the object can be achieved only by stoppage of imports or by a high tariff wall. A limiting factor will, of course, be the many trade agreements with foreign countries. Foreign trade cannot be unilateral except where either of the countries produces goods which it cannot obtain from elsewhere. We have, therefore, to depart from the principle of encouraging swadeshi in certain cases in the interests of international trade.

7. Lastly, mere stoppage of imports or high tariff duties do not solve the problem. The whole scheme has to be supplemented by a well-directed and continuous drive for "Buy Indian."

8. These are my ideas, on the lines of which you can make investigations and chalk out a programme. It will involve thoughtful consultations with business interests as well as other Ministries, but the effort has got to be made. We are gradually drifting away from swadeshi and taking more and more to foreign goods. Even where we produce articles of a comparable quality the tendency is to buy foreign rather than buy Indian. In our own national interests, this has got to be stopped and a beginning must be made right now. A dynamic programme of swadeshi has to be pushed through, and if you can initiate it or lend a helping hand to indigenous industry, I am sure you will have done a great service to the country.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri Harekrushna Mahtab
Minister for Industry & Supply
New Delhi

Dehra Dun
20 June 1950

My dear Mahtab,

I am sending herewith a cutting of what you [are] reported to have stated at a meeting in Bombay. I should like to know whether you are correctly reported. On certain matters, it appears that the foreign embassies and correspondents have reported your views and that has resulted in some embarrassing enquiries from the External Affairs Ministry. They all comment, with some glee, that, in spite of your vow of silence, you have been drawn into statements which are critical, if not worse, of the Government of India and some of the States.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri Harekrushna Mahtab
Minister for Industry & Supply
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

EXTRACTS FROM THE TIMES OF INDIA DATED 15 JUNE 1950 REGARDING
H. K. MAHTAB'S INTERVIEW

"Prohibition to my mind is an impracticable proposition," said Mr. Harekrushna Mahtab, Minister for Industry & Supply, replying to a variety of questions relating to subjects ranging from high governmental policies to intriguing party politics, at a "question-answer" meeting held at Green's Hotel under the auspices of the Progressive Group in Bombay on Wednesday.

Answering in the affirmative, Mr. Mahtab said that although at one time he had fought for the cause of prohibition and even courted imprisonment on that issue, he had subsequently changed his opinion entirely when faced with realities. "I am not an orthodox Congressman, but a practical man," he added.

The Minister said: "When the issue of Prohibition was raised on the floor of the Orissa Assembly two years ago by Congressmen, who wanted the party mandate to be fulfilled, I resolutely opposed the move as I was convinced that it would not be workable."

Referring to the suspicion existing in the minds of industrialists about nationalisation of industries, the Minister said that the meaning of the term "nationalisation" had not so far been properly understood by the people. Most of them thought that nationalisation was akin to confiscation, he said, but hastened to assure that no private property could be taken away by Government without compensation according to the provisions of the Constitution. In spite of such an assurance having been specified in the Constitution, many people, particularly industrialists, still viewed the proposition as "something sinister."

Asked whether it was not a fact that some Government officials controlling industries, like textiles, had no practical knowledge of the working of mills or of the cloth trade, the Minister said: "It is a fact and that is my complaint. Civil service officials are supposed to know everything from prohibition to control of kerosene. It is painful to realise that some of them are not aware of the technicalities of a particular job. At present I am thinking out a proposal to recruit officers from the industry itself to work the technical departments of the Ministry."

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New Delhi
21 June 1950

Revered Sardarji,

Your D.O. of 20 June 1950. First of all the report that I took a vow not to speak was incorrect and in spite of my making it clear to many reporters, that has not yet been corrected. What I said was that I would not discuss Government actions in public meetings organised by all and sundry. What the Government would or would not do is not a matter for discussion in public meetings.

As regards the press report, a cutting of which you have kindly sent me, twists have been made here and there. As regards prohibition, the question was why as Chief Minister of Orissa I did not introduce prohibition in the State. In reply to that I explained that because of the aboriginal population which is 25 per cent of the whole population it was not practicable to introduce prohibition by legislation, but other steps have been taken such as propaganda etc. I made it clear also that while this was the case in Orissa the conditions in other provinces were different.

As regards the civil officers, the question was if I agreed that there were many inefficient officers in technical departments. In reply I said that so long as officers working in various technical

lines, including industries, do not come forward to take up Government service at sacrifice, the thing has to be managed with civil officers.

With regard to the nationalisation of industries, I think I correctly stated the Government of India's policy as it stands today.

So far as the question of prohibition is concerned, I received a letter from Mr. [B.G.] Kher¹ and I have made it clear to him as to what I said on the occasion. I am told a correction has appeared in the newspapers. I am sorry I have not seen it yet. If you think any correction is to be made, I shall do it as you suggest.

Yours sincerely,
H. K. Mahtab

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Dehra Dun.

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EXTRACT

1 Queen Victoria Road
New Delhi
10 June 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

The plan for [sugar] decontrol, if accepted, will have to be worked out in full detail and an announcement will have to be made at a time which yields the maximum of advantage. Provision will have to be made for an adequate quantity of import so that the pipeline of supplies should be filled before decontrol becomes operative and prices should be prevented from rising to an unduly high level. An additional 50,000 tons therefore will be necessary for consumption in the month of January as production is not sufficiently advanced by then to provide adequate stocks in the market. It is understood that the foreign exchange position at present is not so tight and an allocation of about Rs. 7 crores which may be necessary to import 1 lakh tons may be forthcoming without difficulty. The world supply position of sugar is by no means easy, but it may be possible to obtain up to about 70,000 tons from sterling areas and the rest from hard currency areas.

¹ Secretary, Swaraj Party and of Bardoli Satyagrah Inquiry Committee; Leader, Bombay Legislature Congress party, 1937; became first Premier, of Bombay 1946-52; later High Commissioner in London, 1952-54

It is of the utmost importance that the price of sugar should be kept in check after decontrol. The price under decontrol will rule at a higher level than the present controlled retail price of about Rs. 33/- per maund but will be very much below the present black market price which varies from Rs. 60 to Rs. 80 per maund. It is believed in knowledgeable circles that an appreciable quantity of sugar, which may be as large as 30 %, of the total supply finds its way back to the black market. Under decontrol a large proportion of this quantity would be freely available for consumption to the genuine consumers and go to ease the supply position which will result in lower prices. It is necessary to take every step to see that the market price under decontrol remains as near the present control price as possible. For this purpose, sugar should be placed under the Open General Licence simultaneously with decontrol. The landed cost of imported sugar (including customs duty of Rs 9¼/- per maund) is round about Rs 34/- per maund and there is no reason why the market price under decontrol should exceed this level if imports are freely allowed. Even if sugar is placed on the OGL we need not apprehend too large a quantity of import, as the world supply position is not easy and the prices are increasing. Considering that the requirement of the country as shown by last year's experience is 12 lakh tons and the production is estimated at 11 lakh tons, we may reasonably expect that imports need not exceed 1 lakh tons. We should, however, keep a close watch on the imports so that they can be stopped at any time, if they tend to exceed the above limit.

The programme of decontrol should be as follows :

- (i) The policy of decontrol should be announced early in September 1950. At that time, the cane area and crop prospects can be fairly accurately estimated.
- (ii) The question of lifting the ban on forward trading in gur simultaneously with the announcement of decontrol may be examined. In view of the increased cane area, this may lead to a fall in ready prices at the time of crushing.
- (iii) The sugar ration will be liberalised to the extent of 10 to 15 % over the present ration from October 1950.
- (iv) Imports—1½ lakh tons should arrive in India by September 1950 and another 1½ lakh tons by December 1950.

- (v) The production and imports during the current year will continue to be allocated to the States for controlled distribution as at present, up to 15 January 1951.
- (vi) Decontrol will apply only to the next season's production which is likely to be marketed from about the beginning of January 1951.
- (vii) The question of continuing a minimum price for sugar-cane on the basis of the landed cost of imported sugar and the question of a maximum price for sugar and gur should be examined.
- (viii) If necessary, to ensure adequate supply of cane to the factories, action may be taken to slow down the movement of gur from factory areas during the crushing season.
- (ix) Sugar should be placed on the OGL from November 1950, so that the trade would have time to enter into contracts for shipment which should arrive from January 1951.

All decisions on gur and sugar policy should be taken by the Central Government and no unilateral action should be permitted by the States. In particular, there should be no inter-State ban imposed by individual States on the movement of gur.

I shall thank you to have the necessary decision taken, as at any rate 50,000 tons will have to be imported early.

With kindest regards,

Yours very sincerely,
K. M. Munshi

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
12 June 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Munshi has sent me a copy of his letter to you regarding decontrol of sugar, and I understand that your private secretary has asked the Cabinet Secretariat, to get a copy of the letter circulated to all the Ministers so that the proposals made therein may be discussed at the next meeting of the Cabinet at Debra Dun.

immediately. The two questions of decontrol and import of sugar were thus interlinked. Moreover, I felt that since the Cabinet was going to discuss the question of cotton policy in which decontrol is one of the issues, it might as well discuss the question of sugar. I did think of the Economic Committee of the Cabinet, but felt that since all the members of the Economic Committee at present in Delhi would be present in the Cabinet, the delay involved in reference of the question to the Economic Committee might be avoided. Further, it would be open to the Cabinet to discuss this matter and refer it to the Economic Committee if it thought it necessary. I am sure you will agree that on the question of urgency, at least to start with, I must accept the view of H.M. Food. I hope you will also agree that if the Cabinet can come to a decision on the question of cotton policy, although some members would be absent, it can also discuss the question of sugar policy. It is, of course, open to the Cabinet to discuss the item and decide to postpone it or to refer it to the Economic Committee or to consult the Planning Commission.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Sir C. D. Deshmukh
Minister for Finance
Camp Dehra Dun

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New Delhi
29 August 1950

My dear Munshi,

I am sending herewith a copy of a letter which Shri K. D. Malaviya, Minister of Development, UP, has written to the Prime Minister. He has sent a copy to me. If the position, as stated in the letter, is true, and I see little reason to doubt it, it seems to be analogous with that of cotton and kapas and we shall have to deal with the problem squarely.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri K. M. Munshi
Minister for Food and Agriculture
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE
EXTRACTS

Lucknow
21/26 August 1950

My dear Jawaharlalji,

If Government wanted the control of sugar effective, the only way possible for us was to rope in gur also within the restrictive measures and for the purpose to have fair price shops run by the existing co-operative societies and at other places by the State.

I wonder if the Government of India know that due to their policy of controlling sugar without controlling gur, last year about five crore maunds of cane which should have under the agreement between the cane societies and the cane growers gone to the mills for producing sugar was diverted to gur and no power could persuade cane growers to honour the agreement and send their cane to mills.

Yours sincerely,
K. D. Malaviya

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New Delhi
30 August 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I am in due receipt of your letter dated 29 August. I am sending you herewith a copy of a letter which I have addressed to Pantji on the lines settled at the Chief Ministers' conference. If we can take the risk of the sugar prices going up for some time, I have no doubt that decontrol is the best remedy. Then, as Malaviya says, things will rectify themselves, prices will go down and there will be any amount of sugar in the country. But whether we can summon up such a courage or not is not for me to say.

I agree with Malaviya that, as suggested by me in my letter to Pantji, control of gur is equally essential. I hope to secure about 50,000 tons of imported sugar and if I am able to do so, the situation will be fairly easy.

With kind regards,

Yours very sincerely,
K. M. Munshi

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

PS.

I may mention that there was a strong opinion in favour of decontrol among the Chief Ministers, but I did not accept it as there was no possibility of obtaining foreign sugar then.

ENCLOSURE
EXTRACTS

New Delhi
24 August 1950

My dear Pantji,

Since we cannot afford to import any substantial quantity of sugar in view of the cornering of all available stocks by the USA and the high world prices, the only alternative we have is to maximise our own production.

I would suggest, therefore, for your concurrence in the following measures:

The minimum price for cane and the price for sugar for the next season should be announced in the first week of September.

The minimum price for cane should be fixed at the same level for cane delivered at the gate as well as for cane delivered at the outstations.

A ceiling price should be fixed for gur and for khandsari, based on the minimum price fixed for cane and the price fixed for sugar.

The Government should exercise the power to freeze the stocks at controlled prices.

The banks should be requested not to make advances against gur.

The setting up of kolhus and khandsari plants in factory zones (which are well defined) should be subject to licence.

The movement of gur from factory zones to other areas should be banned during the entire crushing season.

The scheduled banks may be authorised to advance loans to the sugar factories to the extent of 85% of the value of sugar instead of 75% as at present.

Yours sincerely,
K. M. Munshi

The Hon'ble Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant
Chief Minister, UP
Lucknow

Dehra Dun
30 June 1950

My dear Gopalaswami,

Kasturbhai¹ [Lalbhai] has sent me a copy of the letter dated 16 June 1950 which he has addressed to you regarding Kandla Port [see enclosure].

I think that in the interests of despatch as well as the future of the port, he might be allowed to pursue the matter further and that the expense which he has estimated is worth incurring. Already, there has been some delay, and I understand that the railway programme, contrary to your assurance to me that it would be expedited, is now expected to take a longer time. I feel that we should try to complete this port as soon as possible and if anything can be done even now to expedite the railway programme, it would be worthwhile doing so. In any case, please let me know as soon as possible what you propose to do about Kasturbhai's request.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar
Minister for Transport & Railways
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

16 June 1950

My dear Shri Gopalaswami Ayyangar,

Herewith I am sending you a copy of a resolution passed by the Kandla Port Advisory Committee at its fourth meeting held at Bombay on 8 June 1950.

You will see from that that the committee considers it absolutely essential that the plans for the development of the entire area comprising the port, the township, the railway colony, and the communications between the different

¹ President, Millowners Association; Member, Central Assembly; Director, Reserve Bank of India, President, FICCI

sections should be prepared on a well co-ordinated basis and consequently be entrusted to a firm of planning consultants who are fully conversant with the problems involved. Accordingly, I have been negotiating with the International Basic Economic Corporation in the USA in this matter and the negotiations now seem to be reaching the final stage.

Actually we established contact with two or three other firms and went into their experience as well as competency to tackle the problems that we would have to face in developing Kandla Port. You probably know that Gautam Sarabhai, Mr. Ambalal Sarabhai's son, is himself keenly interested in problems of town planning and has come in contact with well-known architects and consultants in the USA and elsewhere. It was he who suggested to me that in his opinion IBEC [International Basic Economic Corporation] would be the most suitable organisation for this purpose. A representative of IBEC was therefore invited to visit Kandla at their own cost and we discussed the entire problem with him. From the talks that we had with him and from the records of the past performances of the corporation, the committee was convinced that out of all the firms we consulted this would certainly be the best one to fulfil our expectations.

However, when we came to the terms for their services we found that they were rather high; they were asking as much as about \$ 1,35,000. We explained to them that this was their first project in India and should they be able to establish a footing, they might be able to secure other jobs as well. In view of this, they should put forward proposals which may be acceptable to us. In reply I have now received a cablegram from them to the effect that they intend to reduce their cost estimates to a reasonable extent.

Personally I feel that I should be able to settle their fees round about \$ 75,000/- and that at this price their services will be a great deal profitable to us. Besides, I also think that considering the size of the project that we have on hand and the amount of money we are likely to spend on it, the cost of their services will form a very small percentage of the total expenditure and will ultimately be the cause of a considerable amount of potential saving to us. I therefore feel that we must avail of the expert services of IBEC.

It so happens that I intend to visit the USA in the near future and will like to carry on further negotiations in New York and finalise them. In the meanwhile, however, I need assurance from the Government that I should go ahead with the negotiations and should I be able to fix the fees at about \$ 75,000 they will be acceptable to the Government. You will appreciate that it will be a little awkward for all concerned if once I persuaded the firm to reduce their cost to a reasonable level and was not in a position to finalise the transaction because of the want of ratification by the Government. I may add that quite one-third of the amount will be payable in India, and to that extent the dollar liability will be about \$ 50,000 only.

As I hope to be leaving soon for the United States I would be very much obliged if you let me have an early reply.

Yours sincerely,
Kasturbhai Lalbhai

The Hon'ble Shri Gopalaswami Ayyangar
New Delhi

RESOLUTION PASSED BY THE KANDLA PORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ON 8 JUNE 1950

III. Town Planning:

1. The Committee resolved that:
 - (a) pending finalisation of arrangements mentioned in sub-para below planning should continue under present arrangements;
 - (b) to avoid costly mistakes, it is necessary to utilise the best available talent and to the fullest extent, even though that might involve extra expenditure of a few lakhs of rupees;
 - (c) the services of a firm of unquestioned repute should be utilised for the preparation of all plans of the entire area, on a well co-ordinated and well-planned basis.
 - (d) Seth Kasturbhai Lalbhai, Chairman of the Committee, be entrusted to settle terms with M/s. International Basic Economic Corporation. This firm, in the opinion of the Committee, are not merely a firm of town planning consultants, but have on their staff well-known experts on water supply, drainage, power supply, road building, etc. and are therefore in a position to evolve a well balanced Master Plan on a sound basis of overall economy.
2. The Committee further resolved that a substantial portion of the cost of town planning should be borne by the Government of India, a moiety being borne by the Sindhu Resettlement Corporation.

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New Delhi
1 July 1950

My dear Sardarji,

I write to acknowledge your letter dated 30 June 1950 regarding Kandla Port.

You say that Kasturbhai has sent you a copy of his letter to me dated 16 June 1950. I wonder if he has simultaneously

or since sent you copies of my letter to him in reply dated 24 June, and his further letter to me dated 27 June. In case he has not, I enclose copies of these two letters for your information.

You will further be interested to read a letter (copy enclosed) from Dr. Koenigsberger to Sukthankar¹ dated 29 June. If what is stated in this letter is true, it is somewhat difficult to understand how Kasturbhai was persuaded into believing that this Corporation was a firm of great repute in the field of town planning. It may be, however, that the International Basic Economic Corporation of New York has been actually engaged in town planning work in spite of the facts which Koenigsberger has reported. These facts confirm the somewhat instinctive note of caution I sounded in my letter to Kasturbhai dated 24 June. We have to obtain full facts before we can commit ourselves with this corporation. Simultaneously with my letter to Kasturbhai dated 24 June, a cable was sent to our Consul-General in New York asking him to make enquiries and to advise us as to the suitability of this Corporation for appointment as our town planning consultants for Kandla. I have no doubt that Kasturbhai himself will also be able to ascertain and report actual facts after returning from New York.

I am by no means convinced that an expenditure of \$ 1,35,000 or even for that matter \$ 75,000 is really necessary for the services in connection with town planning which this or any other firm might render to us. But the actual payment can be settled after further investigation.

I am rather surprised that you feel that the Railway Board is not implementing the assurance I gave you about expediting the railway construction programme. I have looked into the matter and am satisfied there has been no avoidable delay on the Railways' side. I have, however, again given instructions that the work should be speeded up as much as possible, and both Sukthankar and Badhwar,² who are visiting Kandla will see to it that the expedition which both you and I desire in this respect will be achieved.

¹Yeshwan Narayan Sukthankar: ICS; Secretary, Commerce Department, Government of India, 1946-47; Secretary, Ministry of Transport, 1947-51; Secretary of the Cabinet, 1953; Governor of Orissa

²Fateh Chand Badhwar. Secretary, Railway Board, April 1944, General Manager, O. T. Railway, January 1947; Chairman, Railway Board

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
N. Gopalaswami

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
Dehra Dun

ENCLOSURE I

DEMI-OFFICIAL LETTER DATED 24 JUNE 1950 FROM N. GOPALASWAMI
AYYANGAR TO KASTURBHAI LALBHAI, AHMEDABAD

Please refer to your letter dated 16 June 1950 enclosing a copy of the resolution passed by the Kandla Advisory Committee at the fourth meeting on 8 June 1950 on town planning at Kandla Port.

While I fully appreciate the importance of utilising without unduly stressing its cost the best available talent and to the fullest extent possible for the purpose of town planning at Kandla, the proposal to employ the International Basic Economic Corporation at Kandla would require careful consideration not only in my Ministry but in other Ministries which are equally closely concerned, such as the Ministry of States, the Ministry of Rehabilitation and the Ministry of Finance. I do not doubt that the International Basic Economic Corporation is a firm of standing and great repute in the USA, but do they possess the necessary Indian background to give us plans for Kandla which will not only conform to sound principles of town planning but also suit Indian conditions? Prima facie it would seem preferable to obtain the services of an expert like Mr. Albert Mayer, who possesses the necessary Indian background, although I am not necessarily committed to his appointment as a town planner or a town planning consultant for Kandla at this stage. I recently saw a note prepared by him on the Master Plan for the capital of Punjab (I), and I must say I was greatly struck not merely by his technical knowledge but his imagination and practical sense.

I see no objection to your carrying on further negotiations in New York with the firm, particularly with a view to see if there is any possibility of their reducing appreciably the charges quoted, but making it clear to them at the same time that you are not in a position to finalise the transaction as the Government of India would like full details from you before they are in a position to sanction the proposal. If you explain the position in this manner to the firm, you need have no cause for embarrassment as the firm will no doubt appreciate that, while you have the necessary authority to negotiate with them, the final decision rests with Government which it is not possible for you to anticipate at this stage.

ENCLOSURE II

LETTER DATED 27 JUNE 1950 FROM KASTURBHAI LALBHAI,
AHMEDABAD, TO N. GOPALASWAMI AYYANGAR, NEW DELHI

Thank you for your letter dated 24 June 1950. I agree with your views and just as you are not committed in favour of Mr. Mayer, similarly my mind is also open. I will contact as many good firms as I possibly can, and take the negotiations to the stage suggested by you, leaving the actual decision to you.

CHAPTER XI
RELATIONS WITH CHINA

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New Delhi
9 July 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

China, for a variety of reasons, is of interest to India. The international situation itself induces us to try to understand exactly what China is. Hence I have circulated some reports from our Ambassador there. I have just read two articles in the London Times from their Special Correspondent in Peking. They are extraordinarily interesting and I thought perhaps you might like to see them. So I enclose a copy of them.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE
CHINA IN EVOLUTION—I

From a Special Correspondent lately in Peking

The resident of Peking who arrives in England is surprised to find that in this country it is commonly assumed that the Chinese Communist Party is the creation of Russia and the obedient instrument of Russian policy. To the Chinese, on the other hand, the Communist Party is accepted as a Chinese movement, the victor of the civil war, a struggle in which the Communists came to stand for Chinese independence as against the Kuomintang's subservience to America. This interpretation of events may seem strange and distorted to Western observers, but it is almost universally accepted by Chinese opinion of all shades. In order to gauge the strength of the new regime in China and understand the reasons for its spectacular triumphs it is necessary to look at events from the point of view of the Chinese themselves.

In China the struggle between the Nationalist Party, the Kuomintang, and the Chinese Communist Party in no way resembled other phases of the cold war. It was not a contest between a democratic regime and a totalitarian movement. Freedom, as understood in the West, the right of opposition to the Government in power, was never admitted by either side, and remains an idea which has no roots in China. The few Western-trained intellectuals who tried to form a liberal party, the Democratic League, had no mass support. Persecuted by the Kuomintang, they have been welcomed by the Communists and now play a purely decorative role in the structure of the new Government. The civil war, to the Chinese, was a struggle between two interpretations of the Revolution, the term which in China means the long, continued effort to modernize the State and raise the level of the economy.

Western observers tend to regard this movement as primarily imitative, the "westernization" of China; to the Chinese it appears as primarily a natural development of their history, a phase of modernization rendered necessary by changing world conditions. The argument is not whether Western or American patterns should be followed as against Russian ideas but whether Communism does not represent a more modern and effective system for carrying out the reforms which the Kuomintang so wholly failed to provide. The Communists offered an alternative, the only alternative in sight, and as their superior efficiency was evident and their authoritarianism in no way uncongenial, the Chinese people have given the new regime their allegiance and swept it into power. In so doing they are not conscious of having made obeisance to Moscow, nor would they admit that Russian influence must now become paramount.

The Chinese Communist Party is not a sudden growth, nor has it come to power through the assistance of Russian arms. No evidence has ever been produced to show that a single Russian officer served with the army of liberation, nor that that army was supplied with Russian weapons or munitions. It is now 22 years since Mao Tse-tung and Chu Teh formed the original Red Army in the mountains of Kiangsi and started on their long struggle against Chiang Kai-shek. During those years they have exercised independent command over their own forces and ruled a wide area of China, an area which was not always the same, but which at all times had a population of several millions. For many years the Communist Party was out of touch with Russia, and it is well-known in China that in this earlier phase, the years from 1928 to 1937, the policy of Mao Tse-tung was not approved by the Kremlin.

At present it is not fashionable in Chinese Communist circles to recall the disagreements which marked those years, nor to point out that it was only when Mao could no longer receive the instructions of Stalin that his war against Chiang Kai-shek began to prosper. But the story of Stalin's birthday in January has not been forgotten. During the celebrations of Stalin's birthday in January of this year an article written by the Communist intellectual Professor Ch'en Po-ta appeared in the official Communist newspaper, the Jen Min Jih Pao.

This article, which was given great prominence and translated into English, dealt in detail with the events of 1927. The mistakes made by the Chinese Communist Party at that time were described, and the disastrous consequences set forth. All these mistakes and disasters were attributed to the wicked "deviationism" of Trotsky. Stalin was held up to admiration as a lone voice calling for the right policy; and Mao Tse-tung, though separated from Stalin by thousands of miles, was represented as divining the "correct" thoughts of Stalin and putting them into practice, thus saving Chinese Communism.

At that time, however, Trotsky had already fallen from power and it was really Stalin who proffered the wrong advice and who was thus responsible for the disasters of 1928 and 1929. Mao Tse-Tung did indeed find the right solution for the Chinese Communists, in arming the peasants, and in discouraging uprisings in the large cities, but these policies were loudly condemned at the time by Stalin and the Comintern. The Chinese, who well remember the real sequence of events, read this article, not with contempt or derision, but with amusement, taking it as a subtle warning to Stalin. Times have changed, and Russia is the friend upon whom Communist China must rely; but it need not be forgotten that there would be no Communist China at all if Russian advice had been heeded and Mao Tse-tung's "correct thoughts" been disregarded.

The differences of interpretation which marked the early years of the Chinese Communist movement have not wholly disappeared now that the party has gained supreme power. In the war years Russia was careful to refrain from annoying the Japanese by any overt help to the Chinese Communists, and there is much evidence to suggest that the Kremlin did not anticipate the sweeping victory which Chinese Communism was so soon to gain. The looting of Manchuria was a poor preparation if that country was expected to become the base of the Chinese Communist power. As late as July 1948, the Russians neither expected nor desired an immediate Communist victory in China. In that month the Chinese Communist Party held a conference to discuss plans for the coming autumn campaign. The advice from Russia was to continue guerrilla warfare for the coming year in order to weaken America, which was expected to continue to pour arms into China in support of the Kuomintang. Russia opposed any plan to end the civil war by taking the large cities. Russian advice was rejected by this conference, the contrary policy was adopted, and within a year the Chinese Communists were in possession of the whole country.

For these reasons the Chinese will not readily agree that the Chinese Communist Party has been the instrument of Russia, or believe that its present policy is necessarily dictated by Moscow. On the other hand, it is certain that the Chinese Communists consider themselves to be orthodox Marxists and are working towards the creation of a Communist State in China. They have no desire to quarrel with the Russians, especially at a time when they face the hostility of the United States. China thus wishes to be the ally of Russia, the only other

Communist Power, but will not admit that such alliance must reduce China to the position of a satellite. Whether it is possible for China to maintain this position in the world today is the question which most engages the thoughts of Chinese intellectuals, who admire the regime for what it has done, but distrust the influence of Russia upon the regime's foreign policy.

There can be little doubt that foreign policy is the greatest problem the Chinese Communists have to face. It is only in the past year that these questions have become at all urgent. While the struggle with the Kuomintang was still undecided it naturally engaged the full attention of the party, and the problems of foreign policy when the party had gained power seemed secondary and remote. Moreover the Chinese Communist Party, having sprung from the discontent of the peasant masses in China, and having grown strong through its skill in satisfying some of the aspirations of this vast population, has always been more concerned with the internal problem than with foreign affairs. It is because it is a Chinese movement seeking to reform conditions in China that it has gained such wide support. Few of its followers are really interested in foreign nations or their fate. The mass support of all classes which the regime now enjoys is not given to theoretical Communism but to the practical programme of reform and reconstruction which the party is now carrying out.

The party has remedied most of the worst evils of Kuomintang rule. The administration, confined in the executive posts to party members, is impeccably honest; the army is admirably disciplined; there is no nepotism; efficiency and drive have replaced sloth and indifference. Intellectuals and experts, non-Communist in their own views, have been asked to work for the regime in order to reconstruct China, and find a congenial atmosphere in which the expert is appreciated and his advice accepted.

The experts and the scientists have all gladly joined the movement to modernize and improve the pitifully impoverished Chinese economy; they are impatient of Western criticism of their action in doing so; but they are also uneasy about the influence of the Russian technical advisory group, which is now much in evidence in Peking. Conflicts of opinion between the Chinese experts and the Russian advisers are frequent and outspoken—though never, of course, made public. The situation is rapidly developing in which the party has the support of the nation in its internal policy, but is faced with doubt and uncertainty from these same supporters in foreign affairs. The Chinese intellectuals, it may be thought, want to have their cake and eat it too; they want the drive and honesty of the Communists, but they do not want to sacrifice the friendship of the West or their contacts with Western thought.

(To be concluded)

CHINA IN EVOLUTION—II

From a Special Correspondent lately in Peking

The question, how far the Chinese Communist Party, hitherto the most independent of the orthodox Communist parties, can henceforward remain relatively free from Russian domination, depends to a great degree on the measure of success the party achieves in consolidating its position. If the party cannot keep the mass support it now enjoys it will increasingly fall under Russian guidance; if it obtains the cheerful allegiance of the people it will be not only strong enough to steer an independent course, but public opinion will compel it do so.

It is therefore important to try to assess the nature of the support the party received from the different classes of society and the manner in which the regime affects the ordinary citizen. In China it is axiomatic that nobody wants to see the Kuomintang return. No organized opposition exists, and the expressions of discontent at high taxation of which the Kuomintang propagandists make so much are little more than the normal grumblings of taxpayers all the world over. To these complaints the Communists have a logical answer. "Our revolution," they would say, "exists to modernize the State; a modern State must carry out many tasks which the old-fashioned Republic neglected, or left to the family. You will have to pay for these things, but at least we can promise you that the money will not be embezzled."

One reason for the lack of opposition is the absence of policies specifically Communist and confiscatory. The Chinese merchant can keep his shop, the small industrialist can run his factory and make his profit, if the high level of taxation leaves him any. The avowed programme of the party at this stage openly encourages the capitalist and the merchant to expand their operations so long as their activity tends towards the industrialization of China.

The Chinese capitalist is well aware that this is capitalism in chains, allowed to grow and fatten for a time, but destined for the slaughterhouse in due season. But the merchant who has known nothing but confiscation, arbitrary taxation, and strangling privileged monopolies under the Kuomintang is well content to enjoy an Indian summer and leave the future to his sons.

The intellectuals are wholly on the side of the new regime. They form the backbone of the Communist Party itself, for whatever the party may be in theory, it is not in fact a party of peasants or workers. The *Kanpu*, the cadres of the party membership, who are its stock workers and its strength, are almost entirely recruited from university students and the army. Among the soldier recruits are some who are of peasant origin, but the enormous expansion of the party since liberation—10,000 recruits came from the Peking universities in 1949—is almost entirely derived from the educated class.

This fact reflects one of the most important differences between Chinese and eastern European Communism. The social structure of China is widely different from that of other Communist countries. The Chinese clan system which linked the richer and educated members with the poor working peasants in an intimate and recognized social relationship makes it impossible for the Communists to single out one class as the "enemies of the people." The impoverishment following the Japanese war and the inflation under the Kuomintang has further levelled off Chinese society, so that a man of culture and education finds little economic difference between himself and a working peasant. The test is therefore wholly based on ideology and not on social origin. Among the recruits who have joined the party in Peking are the granddaughter of a Manchu prince and many sons of the high officials of the Empire and Republic. The party is in some ways almost a reconstruction of the Mandarinate, but united by a Marxist and not a Confucian philosophy.

The vast task of reconstruction and industrialisation upon which the Communist regime has embarked makes it imperative that every educated man should be employed. The literate are too few to be excluded on grounds of class origin. They are also too impoverished by the wars to have any economic motive for opposition. Since there is no enemy class, and no opposition, there is no terror. Ex-officials of the Kuomintang, Manchu princes, former landlords, and ex-officers live peacefully in Peking, in no danger of arrest or imprisonment so long as they refrain from anti-Government political activity.

The land has been divided in many areas, though not yet in all, and the landlord only retains a tenth of his property unless that share would be too small to be an economic unit. Owners of large mansions in Peking, who find it hard to maintain these great houses, may freely sell them, and have been known to reject offers from the Communist authorities when these were considered too low. Taxation and the more or less compulsory purchase of Victory Bonds is quickly dissipating the accumulated wealth of the rich, but no measure of outright confiscation has been applied to private capital.

The peasants, who at first rejoiced to be given their land and to see the end of the usurious rents they used to pay, are finding the new taxation burdensome. They are told that when the war of liberation is at an end their lot will be lightened, but they have seen too many wars to put much faith in such promises. It is hard to assess to what extent the peasants are better off materially by owning their land. The situation varies in different regions and depends also on the season. Famine, such as has afflicted wide regions in the north, has wiped out any benefit they might have received. Elsewhere the disappearance of the usurer and the agent of absentee landlords has been an unmixed blessing. So far, on balance, material lot of the peasant is probably little changed, but the treatment he received from officials and soldiers is so transformed that against continuing poverty must be set great psychological satisfactions.

The new regime has, for the first time, brought kindness and decency into the day-to-day administration. The peasant is treated as a human being, allowed to take his seat not only in the railway carriage, where before he would crouch in the doorway, but on the village council and the party organisations. The police, hitherto openly the agents of the ruling clique and the slaves of the military, now treat the poor and lowly with a genuine respect and kindness, which can be daily witnessed in the streets of Peking. High-ranking Communist officers have been seen to leave their staff car to help a peasant whose horse had fallen, and it is not only among the upper ranks of the party that this new spirit of comradeship, bred of the guerilla war and the Long March, is in evidence. The amazing discipline and behaviour of soldiery, for so long the curse of Chinese life, is a transformation which has more profoundly impressed the Chinese people than any other manifestation of the Communist rule.

Behind all this lies the long experience of the Communists in the guerilla period, when only the co-operation of the peasants made survival and victory possible. How long, people ask, will it last now that the party occupies the seats of power and enjoys, or at least could if it wished to enjoy, the fleshpots of the great cities? It is clear enough that the Communists have considered this problem and have taken measures to avert the danger. Members of the party must live a life apart. They receive little pay, but have every bodily need provided by the party. They may not freely mix with the ordinary citizens, not even with their relatives, without party permission. Under a stern and almost monastic discipline the party member lives a dedicated life, deliberately cut off from his old social environment. He has no wants, and therefore should need no money. Efficient, honest, fanatical, and yet humane the Chinese Communist is a formidable and single-minded devotee.

It cannot be denied that the Communist revolution has brought many concrete benefits and still more imponderable satisfaction to all classes. But for the foreign resident and merchant the situation is somewhat different. It used to be said that the foreign nations wanted to see a strong, united and independent China. They can see it now, but the advantages which were expected to follow from the end of the civil war are not so apparent. The men who made the Communist revolution come from the west centre of China. Hunan, Szechuan and Hupei have provided most of the leaders, both civil and military. These men have spent their whole lives in the interior, and few of them have ever been abroad (very few of the original leaders were Russian trained). They have, in addition to a Marxist hatred of "capitalist imperialism," an old, rooted, Chinese exclusiveness. Underlying much of the policy and practice of the new regime is a revival of ideas which, long dormant, have always appealed to the Chinese people.

It was not by chance that the Communists made Peking once more the capital, and gave it back its historic name. The imperial atmosphere of the city of the emperors has no terrors for them. The regime is, perhaps, only half consciously, modelling much of its practice on the great dynasties of the past. The party, trained on Marx and Mao Tse-tung rather than on Confucius, replaces and resembles the mandarins of the early vigorous ages. The seat of government, if some advisers have their way, will once more be the Forbidden City; and to the foreign trader the old attitude of suspicious hostility and jealous obstruction is once more in evidence.

The Communists do not care for the fate of the great trading posts. The Chinese of these cities were, in their view, infected with a foreign outlook, unhealthy and undesirable. If such communities wither and change, they will not be regretted. The foreign trader will only be tolerated if he is indispensable, as are the shipping firms. The small business man and the small import and export firm are doomed. The big business which imports goods which cannot be had elsewhere, must be tolerated at least until the State trading corporations can supplant the foreign trader altogether.

A new China has arisen, an uncomfortable, difficult, and suspicious neighbour; but a nation mainly absorbed in its own complex affairs, and after 12 years of war, genuinely hoping for peace.

[Concluded]

The Times, London
29 June 1950

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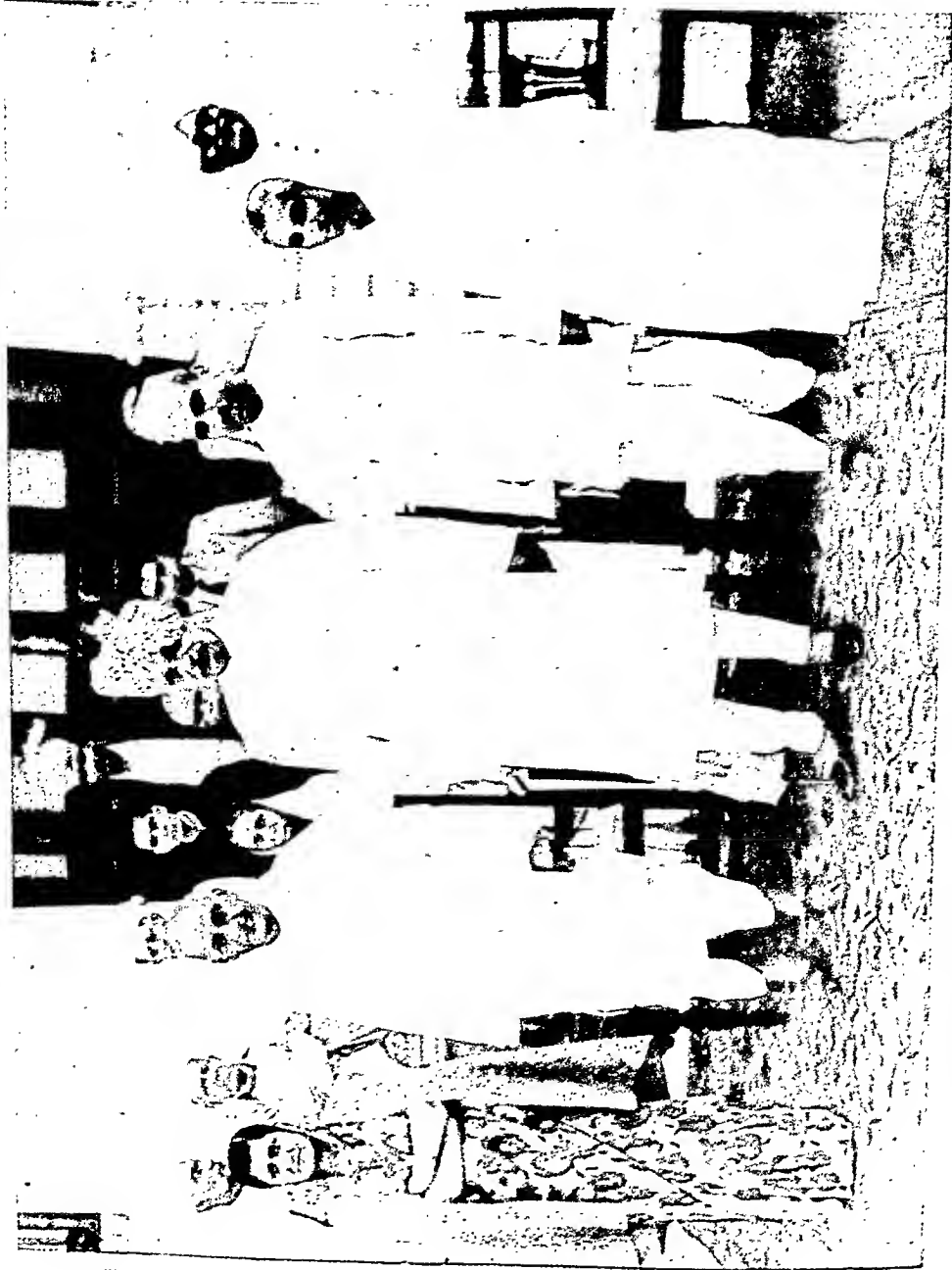
New Delhi
7 November 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Ever since my return from Ahmedabad and after the Cabinet meeting the same day which I had to attend at practically 15 minutes' notice and for which I regret I was not able to read all the papers, I have been anxiously thinking over the problem of Tibet and I thought I should share with you what is passing through my mind.

2. I have carefully gone through the correspondence between the External Affairs Ministry and our Ambassador in Peking and through him the Chinese Government. I have tried to peruse this correspondence as favourably to our Ambassador and the Chinese Government as possible, but I regret to say that

neither of them comes out well as a result of this study. The Chinese Government have tried to delude us by professions of peaceful intentions. My own feeling is that at a crucial period they managed to instil into our Ambassador a false sense of confidence in their so-called desire to settle the Tibetan problem by peaceful means. There can be no doubt that during the period covered by this correspondence the Chinese must have been concentrating for an onslaught on Tibet. The final action of the Chinese, in my judgment, is little short of perfidy. The tragedy of it is that the Tibetans put faith in us; they chose to be guided by us; and we have been unable to get them out of the meshes of Chinese diplomacy or Chinese malevolence. From the latest position, it appears that we shall not be able to rescue the Dalai Lama. Our Ambassador has been at great pains to find an explanation or justification for Chinese policy and actions. As the External Affairs Ministry remarked in one of their telegrams, there was a lack of firmness and unnecessary apology in one or two representations that he made to the Chinese Government on our behalf. It is impossible to imagine any sensible person believing in the so-called threat to China from Anglo-American machinations in Tibet. Therefore, if the Chinese put faith in this, they must have distrusted us so completely as to have taken us as tools or stooges of Anglo-American diplomacy or strategy. This feeling, if genuinely entertained by the Chinese in spite of your direct approaches to them, indicates that even though we regard ourselves as friends of China the Chinese do not regard us as their friends. With the Communist mentality of "whoever is not with them being against them," this is a significant pointer, of which we have to take due note. During the last several months, outside the Russian camp, we have practically been alone in championing the cause of Chinese entry into the UNO and in securing from the Americans assurances on the question of Formosa. We have done everything we could to assuage Chinese feelings, to allay its apprehensions and to defend its legitimate claims in our discussions and correspondence with America and Britain and in the UNO. In spite of this, China is not convinced about our disinterestedness; it continues to regard us with suspicion and the whole psychology is one, at least outwardly, of scepticism, perhaps mixed with a little hostility. I doubt if we can go any further than we have done already to convince China of our good intentions, friendliness and goodwill. In Peking we have an Ambassador who is eminently suitable for putting across the friendly



WITH THE JAM SAHEB OF NAVANAGAR AND HIS WIFE, DURING A VISIT TO SAURASHTRA.
ON RIGHT ARE U. N. DIEDAR, CHIEF MINISTER OF SAURASHTRA, AND MANIBEN

point of view. Even he seems to have failed to convert the Chinese. Their last telegram to us is an act of gross discourtesy not only in the summary way it disposes of our protest against the entry of Chinese forces into Tibet but also in the wild insinuation that our attitude is determined by foreign influences. It looks as though it is not a friend speaking in that language but a potential enemy.

3. In the background of this, we have to consider what new situation now faces us as a result of the disappearance of Tibet, as we knew it, and the expansion of China almost up to our gates. Throughout history we have seldom been worried about our north-east frontier. The Himalayas have been regarded as an impenetrable barrier against any threat from the north. We had a friendly Tibet which gave us no trouble. The Chinese were divided. They had their own domestic problems and never bothered us about our frontiers. In 1914, we entered into a convention with Tibet which was not endorsed by the Chinese. We seem to have regarded Tibetan autonomy as extending to independent treaty relationship. Presumably, all that we required was Chinese counter-signature. The Chinese interpretation of suzerainty seems to be different. We can, therefore, safely assume that very soon they will disown all the stipulations which Tibet has entered into with us in the past. That throws into the melting pot all frontier and commercial settlements with Tibet on which we have been functioning and acting during the last half a century. China is no longer divided. It is united and strong. All along the Himalayas in the north and north-east, we have on our side of the frontier a population ethnologically and culturally not different from Tibetans or Mongoloids. The undefined state of the frontier and the existence on our side of a population with its affinities to Tibetans or Chinese have all the elements of potential trouble between China and ourselves. Recent and bitter history also tells us that communism is no shield against imperialism and that the Communists are as good or as bad imperialists as any other. Chinese ambitions in this respect not only cover the Himalayan slopes on our side but also include important parts of Assam. They have their ambitions in Burma also. Burma has the added difficulty that it has no McMahon Line round which to build up even the semblance of an agreement. Chinese irredentism and Communist imperialism are different from the expansionism or imperialism of the Western Powers. The former has a cloak of ideology which makes it ten times more dangerous. In the guise of ideological

expansion lie concealed racial, national or historical claims. The danger from the north and north-east, therefore, becomes both communist and imperialist. While our western and north-western threat to security is still as prominent as before, a new threat has developed from the north and north-east. Thus, for the first time, after centuries, India's defence has to concentrate itself on two fronts simultaneously. Our defence measures have so far been based on the calculations of a superiority over Pakistan. In our calculations we shall now have to reckon with Communist China in the north and in the north-east, a Communist China which has definite ambitions and aims and which does not, in any way, seem friendly disposed towards us.

4. Let us also consider the political conditions on this potentially troublesome frontier. Our northern or north-eastern approaches consist of Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, the Darjeeling [area] and tribal areas in Assam. From the point of view of communications, they are weak spots. Continuous defensive lines do not exist. There is almost an unlimited scope for infiltration. Police protection is limited to a very small number of passes. There, too, our outposts do not seem to be fully manned. The contact of these areas with us is by no means close and intimate. The people inhabiting these portions have no established loyalty or devotion to India. Even the Darjeeling and Kalimpong areas are not free from pro-Mongoloid prejudices. During the last three years we have not been able to make any appreciable approaches to the Nagas and other hill tribes in Assam. European missionaries and other visitors had been in touch with them, but their influence was in no way friendly to India or Indians. In Sikkim, there was political ferment some time ago. It is quite possible that discontent is smouldering there. Bhutan is comparatively quiet, but its affinity with Tibetans would be a handicap. Nepal has a weak oligarchic regime based almost entirely on force; it is in conflict with a turbulent element of the population as well as with enlightened ideas of the modern age. In these circumstances, to make people alive to the new danger or to make them defensively strong is a very difficult task indeed and that difficulty can be got over only by enlightened firmness, strength and a clear line of policy. I am sure the Chinese and their source of inspiration, Soviet Russia, would not miss any opportunity of exploiting these weak spots, partly in support of their ideology and partly in support of their ambitions. In my judgment, therefore, the situation is one in which we cannot afford either to be complacent or to be vacillating. We

must have a clear idea of what we wish to achieve and also of the methods by which we should achieve it. Any faltering or lack of decisiveness in formulating our objectives or in pursuing our policy to attain those objectives is bound to weaken us and increase the threats which are so evident.

5. Side by side with these external dangers, we shall now have to face serious internal problems as well. I have already asked [H. V. R.] Jengar to send to the E. A. Ministry a copy of the Intelligence Bureau's appreciation of these matters. Hitherto, the Communist Party of India has found some difficulty in contacting Communists abroad, or in getting supplies of arms, literature, etc. from them. They had to contend with the difficult Burmese and Pakistan frontiers on the east or with the long seaboard. They shall now have a comparatively easy means of access to Chinese Communists and through them to other foreign Communists. Infiltration of spies, fifth columnists and Communists would now be easier. Instead of having to deal with isolated Communist pockets in Telengana and Warangal we may have to deal with Communist threats to our security along our northern and north-eastern frontiers where, for supplies of arms and ammunition, they can safely depend on Communist arsenals in China. The whole situation thus raises a number of problems on which we must come to an early decision so that we can, as I said earlier, formulate the objectives of our policy and decide the methods by which those objectives are to be attained. It is also clear that the action will have to be fairly comprehensive, involving not only our defence strategy and state of preparations but also problems of internal security to deal with which we have not a moment to lose. We shall also have to deal with administrative and political problems in the weak spots along the frontier to which I have already referred.

6. It is, of course, impossible for me to be exhaustive in setting out all these problems. I am, however, giving below some of the problems which, in my opinion, require early solution and round which we have to build our administrative or military policies and measures to implement them.

- (a) A military and intelligence appreciation of the Chinese threat to India both on the frontier and to internal security.
- (b) An examination of our military position and such re-disposition of our forces as might be necessary, particularly with the idea of guarding important routes or areas which are likely to be the subject of dispute.

- (c) An appraisalment of the strength of our forces and, if necessary, reconsideration of our retrenchment plans for the Army in the light of these new threats.
 - (d) A long-term consideration of our defence needs. My own feeling is that, unless we assure our supplies of arms, ammunition and armour, we should be making our defence position perpetually weak and we would not be able to stand up to the double threat of difficulties both from the west and north-west and north and north-east.
 - (e) The question of Chinese entry into UNO. In view of the rebuff which China has given us and the method which it has followed in dealing with Tibet, I am doubtful whether we can advocate its claims any longer. There would probably be a threat in the UNO virtually to outlaw China in view of its active participation in the Korean war. We must determine our attitude on this question also.
 - (f) The political and administrative steps which we should take to strengthen our northern and north-eastern frontiers. This would include the whole of the border, i.e. Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, Darjeeling and the tribal territory in Assam.
 - (g) Measures of internal security in the border areas as well as the States flanking those areas, such as UP, Bihar, Bengal and Assam.
 - (h) Improvement of our communications, road, rail, air and wireless, in these areas and with the frontier outposts.
 - (i) Policing and intelligence of frontier posts.
 - (j) The future of our mission at Lhasa and the trade posts at Gyantse and Yatung and the forces which we have in operation in Tibet to guard the trade routes.
 - (k) The policy in regard to the McMahon Line.
5. These are some of the questions which occur to my mind. It is possible that a consideration of these matters may lead us into wider questions of our relationship with China, Russia, America, Britain and Burma. This, however, would be of a general nature, though some might be basically very important, e.g. we might have to consider whether we should not enter into closer association with Burma in order to strengthen the latter in its dealings with China. I do not rule out the possibility that, before

applying pressure on us, China might apply pressure on Burma. With Burma, the frontier is entirely undefined and the Chinese territorial claims are more substantial. In its present position, Burma might offer an easier problem for China and, therefore, might claim its first attention.

6. I suggest that we meet early to have a general discussion on these problems and decide on such steps as we might think to be immediately necessary and direct quick examination of other problems with a view to taking early measures to deal with them.

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

EXTRACTS

A NOTE BY THE STATES MINISTRY ON NEW PROBLEMS OF INTERNAL SECURITY CAUSED BY CHINESE OCCUPATION OF TIBET

Soviet Russia now feels that India will be more swayed by the influence of China than of Russia and Mao Tse-tung will make a better leader for the Indian masses than even Stalin can. It is with this object that the Peking Liaison Bureau was established last year, that Mao Tse-tung has been given a dominating voice in the affairs of India and the Far East and that the Indian Communists have been told by numerous Communist publications, as well as by the Cominform, in clear unambiguous words, to follow the China way to victory. If therefore the occupation of Tibet by the Communist forces gives to world Communism any strategical and tactical advantage of furthering the cause of Communism in India, all such advantages will be exploited legally and illegally to the fullest extent without any consideration for international conventions even though the Chinese Government may continue to remain superficially in the friendliest terms with the Indian Government. And the occupation of Tibet by the Chinese Communists does open up vast possibilities for creating internal disorders and disruptions within India.

Up till now India's northern frontier from Ladakh in the west to the Sadiya Hill Tracts in the east has been free from any dangers of external invasion or from even any subversive movements fostered by external forces. With Tibet as a weak and autonomous country, giving many facilities to India which no other independent country would give, India could rightly feel absolutely secure about its northern frontier and this sense of security was reflected in the past in all the policies followed with respect to this northern frontier and actions taken for its security in these areas and on the understanding that no danger would come to India from the north very little

security measures have been taken which in the altered circumstances will be found to be completely inadequate.

With an aggressive Chinese Communist Government in Tibet, intent on furthering the creed of International Communism in India and holding the belief that world Communism and so Communism in China can never be safe unless India becomes a Communist country and following the basic Communist creed that the International proletariat (which in other words means the Soviet and the Chinese Governments) must assist the peoples of all colonial countries (which include India) in their fight for national liberation (which in India means the overthrow of the Nehru Government), every method will be adopted to disrupt the integrity of India and what will be more opportune and easy than to foster trouble in these frontier areas where India's administrative control is not strong and where her cultural influence is less.

With China on India's long unguarded frontier, the Indian Communists will be in a good position to get help by way of supply of arms, by the infiltration of trained agents and by direct contact with the Chinese Communists. The Indian Communists have been badly mauled during the last 2½ years and they are passing through a difficult period and there is definite information that they are wanting direct guidance from foreign Communists. So far attempts to make such contacts have to a great extent been countered by Governmental action, but with China strongly entrenched in Tibet it will be extremely difficult to stop this contact. With the commencement of trouble in the frontier areas where India's armed forces will have to be moved, more Telengana struggles will be launched in India itself so as to dissipate India's armed forces by wide dispersal.

PRIME MINISTER NEHRU'S NOTE ON CHINA AND TIBET DATED
18 NOVEMBER 1950

[The note was obviously forwarded to Sardar Patel as it answered indirectly some of the matters raised in the Sardar's letter of 7 Nov. 1950.]

The Chinese Government having replied to our last note, we have to consider what further steps we should take in this matter. There is no immediate hurry about sending a reply to the Chinese Government. But we have to send immediate instructions to Shri B. N. Rau as to what he should do in the event of Tibet's appeal being brought up before the Security Council or the General Assembly.

2. The content of the Chinese reply is much the same as their previous notes, but there does appear to be a toning down and an attempt at some kind of a friendly approach.

3. It is interesting to note that they have not referred specifically to our mission [at] Lhasa or to our trade agents or military escort at Gyangse etc.

We had mentioned these especially in our last note. There is an indirect reference, however, in China's note. At the end, this note says that "As long as our two sides adhere strictly to the principle of mutual respect for territory, sovereignty, equality and mutual benefit, we are convinced that the friendship between China and India should be developed in a normal way and that problems relating to Sino-Indian diplomatic, commercial and cultural relations with respect to Tibet may be solved properly and to our mutual benefit through normal diplomatic channels." This clearly refers to our trade agents and others in Tibet. We had expected a demand from them for the withdrawal of these agents etc. The fact that they have not done so has some significance.

4. Stress is laid in China's note on Chinese sovereignty over Tibet, which we are reminded, we have acknowledged, on Tibet being an integral part of China's territory and therefore a domestic problem. It is however again repeated that outside influences, have been at play obstructing China's mission in Tibet. In fact, it is stated that liberation of Changtu proves that foreign forces and influences were inciting Tibetan troops to resist. It is again repeated that no foreign intervention will be permitted and that the Chinese army will proceed.

5. All this is much the same as has been said before, but it is said in a somewhat different way and there are repeated references in the note to China desiring the friendship of India.

6. It is true that in one of our messages to the Chinese Government we used "sovereignty" of China in relation to Tibet. In our last message we used the word "suzerainty." After receipt of the last China's note, we have pointed out to our Ambassador that "suzerainty" was the right word and that "sovereignty" had been used by error.

7. It is easy to draft a reply to the Chinese note, pressing our viewpoint and countering some of the arguments raised in the Chinese note. But before we do so we should be clear in our own minds as to what we are aiming at, not only in the immediate future but from a long-term view. It is important that we keep both these viewpoints before us. In all probability China, that is present-day China, is going to be our close neighbour for a long time to come. We are going to have a tremendously long common frontier. It is unlikely, and it would be unwise to expect, that the present Chinese Government will collapse, giving place to another. Therefore, it is important to pursue a policy which will be in keeping with this long-term view.

8. I think it may be taken for granted that China will take possession, in a political sense at least, of the whole of Tibet. There is no likelihood whatever of Tibet being able to resist this or stop it. It is equally unlikely that any foreign power can prevent it. We cannot do so. If so, what can we do to help in the maintenance of Tibetan autonomy and at the same time avoiding continuous tension and apprehension on our frontiers?

9. The Chinese note has repeated that they wish the Tibetan people to have what they call "regional autonomy and religious freedom." This autonomy can obviously not be anything like the autonomy verging on independence which Tibet has enjoyed during the last forty years or so. But it is reasonable to assume from the very nature of Tibetan geography, terrain and climate, that a large measure of autonomy is almost inevitable. It may of course be that this autonomous Tibet is controlled by communist elements in Tibet. I imagine however that it is, on the whole, more likely that what will be attempted will be a pro-communist China administration rather than a communist one.

10. If world war comes, then all kinds of difficult and intricate problems arise and each one of these problems will be inter-related with others. Even the question of defence of India assumes a different shape and cannot be isolated from other world factors. I think that it is exceedingly unlikely that we may have to face any real military invasion from the Chinese side, whether in peace or in war, in the foreseeable future. I base this conclusion on a consideration of various world factors. In peace, such an invasion would undoubtedly lead to world war. China, though internally big, is in a way amorphous and easily capable of being attacked on its sea coasts and by air. In such a war, China would have its main front in the South and East and it will be fighting for its very existence against powerful enemies. It is inconceivable that it should divert its forces and its strength across the inhospitable terrain of Tibet and undertake a wild adventure across the Himalayas. Any such attempt will greatly weaken its capacity to meet its real enemies on other fronts. Thus I rule out any major attack on India by China. I think these considerations should be borne in mind, because there is far too much loose talk about China attacking and overrunning India. If we lose our sense of perspective and world strategy and give way to unreasoning fears, then any policy that we might have is likely to fail.

11. While there is, in any opinion, practically no chance of a major attack on India by China, there are certainly chances of gradual infiltration across our border and possibly of entering and taking possession of disputed territory, if there is no obstruction to this happening. We must therefore take all necessary precautions to prevent this. But, again, we must differentiate between these precautions and those that might be necessary to meet a real attack.

12. If we really feared an attack and had to make full provision for it, this would cast an intolerable burden on us, financial and otherwise, and it would weaken our general defence position. There are limits beyond which we cannot go, at least for some years, and a spreading out of our army on distant frontiers would be bad from every military or strategic point of view.

13. In spite of our desire to settle the points at issue between us and Pakistan, and developing peaceful relations with it, the fact remains that our major possible enemy is Pakistan. This has compelled us to think of our defence

mainly in terms of Pakistan's aggression. If we begin to think of, and prepare for, China's aggression in the same way, we would weaken considerably on the Pakistan side. We might well be got in a pincer movement. It is interesting to note that Pakistan is taking a great deal of interest, from this point of view, in developments in Tibet. Indeed it has been discussed in the *Pakistan Press* that the new danger from Tibet to India might help them to settle the Kashmir problem according to their wishes. Pakistan has absolutely nothing in common with China or Tibet. But if we fall out completely with China, Pakistan will undoubtedly try to take advantage of this, politically or otherwise. The position of India thus will be bad from a defence point of view. We cannot have all the time two possible enemies on either side of India. This danger will not be got over, even if we increase our defence forces or even if other foreign countries help us in arming. The measure of safety that one gets by increasing the defence apparatus is limited by many factors. But whatever that measure of safety might be, strategically we would be in an unsound position and the burden of this will be very great on us. As it is, we are facing enormous difficulties, financial, economic, etc.

14. The idea that communism inevitably means expansion and war, or to put it more precisely, that Chinese communism means inevitably an expansion towards India, is rather naïve. It may mean that in certain circumstances. Those circumstances would depend upon many factors, which I need not go into here. The danger really is not from military invasion but from infiltration of men and ideas. The ideas are there already and can only be countered by other ideas. Communism is an important element in the situation. But, by our attaching too great importance to it in this context, we are likely to misjudge the situation from other and more important angles.

15. In a long-term view, India and China are two of the biggest countries of Asia bordering on each other and both with certain expansive tendencies, because of their vitality. If their relations are bad, this will have a serious effect not only on both of them but on Asia as a whole. It would affect our future for a long time. If a position arises in which China and India are inveterately hostile to each other, like France and Germany, then there will be repeated wars bringing destruction to both. The advantage will go to other countries. It is interesting to note that both the UK and the USA appear to be anxious to add to the unfriendliness of India and China towards each other. It is also interesting to find that the USSR does not view with favour any friendly relations between India and China. These are long-term reactions which one can fully understand, because *India and China at peace with each other* would make a vast difference to the whole set-up and balance of the world. Much of course depends upon the development of either country and how far communism in China will mould the Chinese people. Even so, these processes are long-range ones and in the long run it is fairly safe to assume that hundreds of millions of people will not change their essential characteristics.

16. These arguments lead to the conclusion that while we should be prepared, to the best of our ability, for all contingencies, the real protection that we should seek is some kind of understanding of China. If we have not got that, then both our present and our future are imperilled and no distant power can save us. I think on the whole that China desires this too for obvious reasons. If this is so, then we should fashion our present policy accordingly.

17. We cannot save Tibet, as we should have liked to do, and our very attempts to save it might well bring greater trouble to it. It would be unfair to Tibet for us to bring this trouble upon her without having the capacity to help her effectively. It may be possible, however, that we might be able to help Tibet to retain a large measure of her autonomy. That would be good for Tibet and good for India. As far as I can see, this can only be done on the diplomatic level and by avoidance of making the present tension between India and China worse.

18. What then should be our instructions to B. N. Rau? From the messages he has sent us, it appears that no member of the Security Council shows any inclination to sponsor Tibet's appeal and that there is little likelihood of the matter being considered by the Council. We have said that [we] are not going to sponsor this appeal, but if it comes up we shall state our viewpoint. This viewpoint cannot be one of full support of the Tibetan appeal, because that goes far and claims full independence. We may say that whatever might have been acknowledged in the past about China's sovereignty or suzerainty, recent events have deprived China of the right to claim that. There may be some moral basis for this argument. But it will not take us or Tibet very far. It will only hasten the downfall of Tibet. No outsider will be able to help her and China, suspicious and apprehensive of these tactics, will make sure of much speedier and fuller possession of Tibet than she might otherwise have done. We shall thus not only fail in our endeavour but at the same time have really a hostile China on our doorstep.

19. I think that in no event should we sponsor Tibet's appeal. I would personally think that it would be a good thing if that appeal is not heard in the Security Council or the General Assembly. If it is considered there, there is bound to be a great deal of bitter speaking and accusation, which will worsen the situation as regards Tibet, as well as the possibility of widespread war, without helping it in the least. It must be remembered that neither the UK nor the USA, nor indeed any other power is particularly interested in Tibet or the future of that country. What they are interested in is embarrassing China. Our interest, on the other hand, is Tibet, and if we cannot serve that interest, we fail.

20. Therefore, it will be better not to discuss Tibet's appeal in the UN. Suppose, however, that it comes up for discussion, in spite of our not wishing

this, what then? I would suggest that our representative should state our case as moderately as possible and ask the Security Council or the Assembly to give expression to their desire that the Sino-Tibetan question should be settled peacefully and that Tibet's autonomy should be respected and maintained. Any particular reference to an article of the Charter of the UN might tie us up in difficulties and lead to certain consequences later, which may prove highly embarrassing for us. Or a resolution of the UN might just be a dead letter, which also will be bad.

21. If my general argument is approved, then we can frame our reply to China's note accordingly.

J. Nehru

18 November 1950

do not propose to issue a statement on this subject. But I shall send him a personal reply. I shall send you copies of the letters.

The war developments in Korea are full of dangerous implications. Probably the next few days will show us what is likely to happen. I greatly fear that we are on the eve of a developing war situation.

I am not writing to you about my visit to the countries of South-East Asia, as this will be a long story. This visit was an exceedingly interesting one and made me understand much of their problems and the present situation. With the Governments of Indonesia and Burma I was brought into fairly intimate contact and we discussed many common subjects and problems. Each one of these countries has to face innumerable difficulties and yet they seem to be making good slowly.

In Burma a rather complicated situation has arisen [on] the China border. Remnants of the Kuomintang army have entered Burma and have taken up an aggressive attitude. Indeed there has been some shooting between them and the Burmese forces. They want to stick on to that part of Burma and use it as a base of operations against China. This of course cannot possibly be permitted by the Burmese Government. But they are hardly strong enough to do anything in the matter. It is quite possible that the Communist forces might chase the Kuomintang forces into Burma. We are asking our Ambassador in Peking to use his discretion in this matter and try to see that the Chinese Government forces do not enter Burma. I have advised Thakin Nu to inform the American Ambassador about this new development as the USA is the only country that can deal with the Formosa Government effectively.

I hope you are keeping well and are profiting by your stay in Dehra Dun.

I do not intend going out of Delhi for two weeks or more at least. I have made a promise to go to the Benares Hindu University on 16 July for a day. I might go to Allahabad also in that connection. There are a number of important happenings here and elsewhere which make it necessary for me to stay here. There is [Sir Owen] Dixon and Kashmir and then the new international developments necessitate some meetings with ambassadors. Many of them want to see me anyhow, as they have not met me for a long time. Nevertheless, I shall try to come over for a day to Dehra Dun to see you.

As I was dictating this letter, your telephone came.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
Dehra Dun

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Dehra Dun
27 June 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter of 26 June 1950.

2. I have already written to you *welcoming your return to the Capital*. You have had a strenuous and successful tour though there were moments of relaxation also, which, I hope, have done you some good.
3. During your absence nothing of much importance happened except Matthai's statement and subsequent developments about which I kept you fully informed. The only matter of some note was our decision regarding cotton prices. That was hardly a matter which I need have specifically reported to you, because it could not have been explained adequately within the limits of an ordinary letter. The whole thing flared up as a result of Mahtab's study of the problem and his visit to Bombay combined with the calculations of the Agriculture Ministry in regard to the probable increase in the total acreage under cotton. The Cabinet papers are quite full on the subject and I hope you have seen them by now.
4. As regards Cabinet meeting, whenever you feel that my presence is necessary in Delhi for the disposal of any important business of the Cabinet, I could come over for a day, though naturally I would like to avoid coming to Delhi so long as the present hot weather persists.
5. Kala Venkata Rao has not yet written to me about the Working Committee meeting. I do not know when he tentatively *proposes to have the meeting* and how urgent the business is. I shall let him know convenient dates as soon as he writes to me in some detail.

CHAPTER XII
WAR CLOUDS

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New Delhi
26 June 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I arrived here this afternoon. In the course of the afternoon I met Munshi, Mahtab and Satyanarayan Sinha and later went to the President. In the evening I invited all the Cabinet Ministers, Ministers of State and the Deputy Ministers just to meet them and have an informal talk with them. Mostly we talked about my visit to South-East Asia.

It will take me two or three days to catch up [with] events happening here during my absence. I was not well supplied with news during my tour and only very special matters were referred to me. I have therefore to bring my knowledge up-to-date.

I consulted my colleagues about a date for the next Cabinet meeting. None of them seems to think that any urgent matter was pending. Two or three of them are going out of Delhi in the course of the next few days. I am therefore for the moment not fixing any date. Naturally I should like you to be present when the Cabinet meeting is held. We may however deal with relatively unimportant matters in your absence.

In Calcutta, Kala Venkata Rao¹ met me and asked me for a date for the Working Committee meeting. He told me that the meeting would have a heavy agenda and was likely to last three or four days. Some matters were rather urgent. I told him that I was going to be in Delhi most of the time and almost any date would suit me. I asked him to get in touch with you to find out a date suitable to you. I presume he has written to you.

The date fixed by us for the next Congress session might have to be reconsidered according to Kala Venkata Rao. A final

¹ Secretary, Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee; minister in Ramaswami Reddiar Cabinet; General Secretary, AICC

date should be fixed soon, because the Nasik Reception Committee should know definitely and also our own programmes will have to be adjusted accordingly.

Maulana Azad had a bad accident last night. He had shifted to his new house and he stepped out of a window about 10 o'clock at night thinking it was a door leading to the garden. As a matter of fact there was a five-foot drop and he fell with a thump. He has fractured his ankle bone and something in his left arm. The injuries are not serious as far as one can make out, but they are very painful, and in any event, will take some time to heal. He has been plastered up and has to remain in bed for some weeks. The doctor says that he will open out the plaster after six weeks. This means that he cannot be up and about for nearly two months. He was to have gone on his Middle Eastern tour about the middle of July. This must be postponed now. Probably it will be best for him now to go after the Congress session.

On arrival here I received two letters from Rajaji. In one of these he said that he had progressed well now and hoped to come to Delhi about the second week of July. The rest in Ooty is doing him good. In his second letter he enclosed a letter addressed to you which he wanted me to forward to you. I am doing so. I do not know who has talked to you about Rajaji coming here. My own impression was that his appointment was generally welcomed by the party. Quite a number of people, among them some who had opposed his name for the Presidency, told me that they liked his appointment as Minister. I had not heard of any criticism thus far. I sent for Satyanarayan Sinha today and asked him about it. He said that possibly two or three persons might have a grouse for their own reasons. But he did not think that generally the appointment was unwelcome. Indeed, he thought that the party would as a whole like it. I consulted some other people here too today who are in touch with party members and they also gave me the same reply.

I do not think we need attach much importance to a few disgruntled persons. In any event, it would be unfortunate and harmful if at this stage we tried to make a change as Rajaji suggests. As you know, he is very sensitive. In this matter however there appears to me to be no reason for him or for us to worry. I am writing to him accordingly.

I have received a reply from Matthai to the letter I sent him. This reply does not appear to me to be in good taste. I

6. As regards the next Congress session, I suggested to [B. S.] Hiray¹ that the date might be postponed to September, but he has written to say that the opinion amongst his own men was that it should be held in August as planned. I do not know what reasons Kala Venkata Rao has for asking for its postponement. The only thing that I can see in justifying the postponement is the disputed elections in some of the States. Whether that would be adequate would depend on the number of disputes and the States involved.

6. I am sorry to hear about the accident to Maulana Sahib. I agree with you that he should now postpone his tour of the Middle East and go after the Congress session if it is held in August. Otherwise, if it is postponed, it might be possible for him to return before the session commences.

7. I have seen Rajaji's letter. It is the reaction which I expected. My idea was nothing else but to keep him in touch with a feeling which I sensed amongst a section of the party. As you say, he is a sensitive person and if something developed after his coming to Delhi, he might have felt that we did not tell him about it earlier. My own impression of a possible grumbling in the party is based not on talks with one or two persons, but on some undercurrent of dissatisfaction on account of old prejudices which do not seem to have died yet. I felt it necessary to warn Rajaji because I felt that if this undercurrent of dissatisfaction suddenly became vocal at the time of the meeting of Parliament, it might not be good for us or for Rajaji. I, therefore, thought it best to tell Rajaji so that he might attune himself even to sectional murmurings and might proceed on that basis. I do not think there can be any question of our dropping him at all. We have merely to be forearmed for dealing with any possible dissatisfaction against his appointment.

8. I am glad you have decided not to issue a statement in reply to Matthai's. A personal reply to his last one should be enough.

9. I share with you your apprehensions regarding the developments in Korea. It seems that the Americans and Russians have come into direct conflict in that area. Whether the conflict would be localised or whether it would spread remains to be seen. The nomination of North Korea as aggressor certainly indicates that the conflict will not be localised. Much will depend, however,

¹ Congressman of long standing and member, CWC; President, MPCC, 1948-52; Minister in Bombay Government, 1952-56

on the importance which the Americans attach to this conflict, which, while internally has the appearance of a civil war, externally has everything to suggest as a conflict of power politics.

10. The situation in Burma to which you refer is again a possible source of conflict. If the Communist forces cross into Burma, the Burmese Government have no option but to treat it as aggression. I do not know what the strength of the Kuomintang army in Burma is, but it is possible that the Burmese forces, engaged as they are in their present civil war, might not be adequate to deal with the Kuomintang army. If so, the Kuomintang army might create for itself an area of operations in Burma. This would be positively dangerous. Any march of the Communist forces into Burma would [have] dangerous possibilities and I do not think we could afford merely to look on.

11. My stay in Dehra Dun has not been as profitable as I expected. The disturbing factor has been repeated attacks of cold which I always get in the hot weather. However, their frequency and intensity has been much less than in Delhi and on the whole I think it has been definitely good that I escaped the climatic rigours of the capital.

12. You must have heard from [G. S.] Bajpai, Vishnu Sahay¹ and probably [D. N.] Kachru about the developments in Kashmir. I am rather apprehensive about Sheikh Sahib's attitude. He seems to act independently of us and is extremely critical of, if not hostile to, us. In particular, Sheikh Sahib's manoeuvres to have a separate talk with Gbulam Abbas fills me with misgivings. It also appears that Dixon is going to try, now that you have returned, to bring about an agreement on the question of demilitarisation. If we are not careful, we might land ourselves in difficulties because once demilitarisation is settled, a plebiscite would be, as it were, round the corner.

13. I hope it will be possible for you to come to Dehra Dun fairly soon. We have now not met for about a month and there is so much to talk about.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister
New Delhi

¹ ICS; Secretary Ministry of Food, 1951-53; Secretary for Kashmir Affairs and Labour Secretary, 1953-57; Cabinet Secretary, 1958-62; member, Planning Commission 1962; Governor of Assam and Nagaland, 1962-67

New Delhi
30 June 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I thank you for your two letters of 27 and 28 June.

I do not propose to trouble you to come here specially for Cabinet meetings. We had two emergency meetings of the Cabinet to deal with the Korea situation. We may have more meetings, but I want to avoid consideration of important matters in your absence and in the absence of some other members of the Cabinet. We shall deal with secondary matters if a Cabinet [meeting] is held and of course any urgent matters that may arise.

I have heard from Kala Venkata Rao about the Working Committee meeting. He said that you were prepared to have it from 12 July or from the 15th. As I intend going away on the 15th to Allahabad and Banaras for two days, I have asked him to fix the meeting for 12 July.

As regards the Congress session, the sooner it is held the better, but Kala Venkata Rao told me that delays in elections made it almost impossible to hold the session by the middle of August as previously announced. He wanted a postponement of at least ten or twelve days for this purpose. I think a final date should be fixed as soon as possible as much depends on this date. We have to fix the date for the next session of Parliament. Mavalankar, as you know, wants to go to London for some opening ceremony of the new House of Commons. I have agreed to his going and I think he should do so. He will be coming back by the middle of September. I think we should have the session to begin some time between 15 and 20 September. In view of world developments, it is not right to delay holding of the session. If Mavalankar is absent for a few days in the beginning it should not matter.

There is no chance of the Maulana being well enough to go abroad before the middle of August at the earliest and it may take a week or two more. Therefore we are provisionally fixing the middle of September for his going. That will come in the way of the session of Parliament to some extent, but he will be

able to attend the Congress session. Incidentally, that will be a better time of the year to travel and to visit places.

As regards the general elections, I quite realise the difficulties involved in making the necessary preparations. We are sufficiently committed to holding them some time before the rains commence next year. I think we ought to be able to manage by then. Delay will be harmful. Of course if insuperable difficulties come in our way, then there is no help for it. We have so tied ourselves up by all kinds of legal and constitutional difficulties that most of our lives are going to be spent in trying to overcome them.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
Dehra Dun

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New Delhi
29 June 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have spoken to you this evening on the telephone. I tried to get you for nearly an hour and a half before I succeeded. Our Cabinet met this evening specially to consider the statement on Korea and went on sitting till after half past seven. The statement we have issued, I feel sure, will satisfy the USA and the UK people, and at the same time maintains the balance and gives us freedom to act as we choose. I had a long talk with the American Ambassador today and he himself suggested to me that we had every right to maintain our general foreign policy and to keep aloof from the various steps that President Truman had indicated in his statement. This would be very embarrassing to us as well as to some other countries in South-East Asia.

We have to watch the situation and our steps very carefully as day-to-day developments take place. I find it difficult to leave Delhi in this state of affairs. Nevertheless I shall try to pay you a visit some time early in July. Otherwise I am not going out till 15 July. I have to visit Banaras for a day on the 17th and I want to spend a day, the 16th, in Allahabad.

The international situation must have its reactions on Kashmir. What these reactions might be, I do not know. But to

talk about plebiscite with the possibility of war facing us seems to me utterly unreal.

Vishnu Sahay and Kachru spoke to me about Sheikh Abdullah's attitude in regard to the jagirdari question. I spoke to Gopalswami about it also. I agree that this attitude of the Kashmir Government is most unwise. I just do not know what we can do about it. I sent a telegram yesterday to Sheikh Abdullah asking him to come here with Bakshi [Ghulam Mohamed]. I have had no reply yet. Today General Hodges, the UN Military Adviser, went to Srinagar.

I am far from happy about the situation in Bengal. While it is perfectly true that conditions in East Bengal are still abnormal and many incidents continue to occur there, the attitude of the East Bengal Government, from all accounts that we get, is fairly good and they appear to be in earnest to implement the pact. The general impression on foreign as well as our observers has been that the chief culprit at the present moment is the Calcutta Press as well as Syama Prasad Mookerjee. The Pakistan Press, more especially the West Pakistan Press, has behaved well. Recently some kind of a goodwill mission went to Western Pakistan and they had a wonderful reception wherever they went. They addressed vast gatherings all over Punjab and Sind. On our side, when Malik and Biswas went to Agartala, Malik was shouted down. Shankarrao Deo was also shouted down in Calcutta. All this makes foreign observers here think that the chief trouble is caused by some of our Press and by the Hindu Mahasabha propaganda. The Delhi Hindi and Urdu Press also continues to be very bad.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Dehra Dun

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Dehra Dun
3 July 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letters dated 29 and 30 June 1950 respectively.

2. I have seen the statement on Korea. While it is satisfactory in its support of the UNO's recommendation, I feel that we need

not have reiterated our foreign policy. Such reiteration implies that this step could be construed as a departure from that policy and we were being apologetic or on the defensive about it. After all, the step which we have taken fits in with our policy of supporting the UNO and invoking the various remedies mentioned in the Charter against aggression. Once we felt, as we did in the case of Korea, that an aggression had taken place, I do not think we can set any limits to our action to resist that aggression. We have to exhaust all the means laid down in the Charter. The question merely would be one of timing and effectiveness. When actual armed aggression takes place, it is doubtful whether negotiations and mediation alone can secure the objective of peace. Negotiations and mediation can avail us only if there is a cessation of hostilities. Otherwise we cannot match words against arms.

3. I am glad you are coming here on the 5th. Apart from the little respite from the heat of Delhi which it will give you, your visit would enable us to talk about so many things which have been exercising your mind as well as mine.

4. I am getting rather worried about Kashmir, particularly the attitude of Sheikh Sahib, his failure to deal with the Communist infiltration in the State, and the dissensions in the National Conference. I have had a talk with P. C. Chaudhuri.¹ From what he tells me it appears that both the National Conference and Sheikh Sahib are losing their hold on the people of the Valley and are becoming somewhat unpopular. At the same time, it appears that there is a marked appreciation of what we have done for the Valley though they naturally feel that they deserve more. In such circumstances and in the world situation today, I agree with you that a plebiscite is unreal. Not only that, it would be positively dangerous because my own feeling is that once the talk starts, the non-Muslims in Jammu and Kashmir would start feeling uneasy and we might be faced with an exodus to India. This would be an additional point to emphasise in respect of our stand that the conditions preliminary to plebiscite should be fully and effectively fulfilled before we can talk of it.

5. I share your anxiety about the situation in Bengal. At the same time, I do feel that a realisation is growing that the pact is the last chance of securing a peaceful settlement of the whole

¹ ICS; Director-General, All India Radio; Secretary, Information and Broadcasting Ministry; Secretary of States Re-organisation Commission

matter. From what Diwakar¹ tells me, it appears that the Bengal Press, particularly Suresh Majumdar and Tushar Kanti Ghosh, have now become converted to this view and mean to implement the Press code. It will be their headache to deal with Syama Prasad Mookerjee's utterances in accordance with that code. If they do not deal with them, we can then take them to task. I find no legal powers to deal with either Press or men like Syama Prasad Mookerjee. Before you left for Indonesia, I drew your attention to the Supreme Court decision in Cross Roads and Organiser cases. That knocks the bottom out of most of our penal laws for the control and regulation of the Press. The views which they have expressed in that judgment on the question of sedition make it doubtful whether we can do anything not only about the speeches of Syama Prasad Mookerjee but also those of the more extremist type. As you say, we have involved ourselves in so many legal and constitutional difficulties that we do not know how to overcome them. I sounded a note of warning and caution when these provisions were being debated in the Drafting Committee, but then we were led away by our idealistic exuberance. We seldom paused to consider the practical and administrative applications of the many constitutional provisions and even their interrelation. My own feeling is that very soon we shall have to sit down and consider constitutional amendments. You will recall that the Chief Justice of India himself referred to difficulties which he was experiencing in regard to the functioning of the Supreme Court. Some minor difficulties we have been able to meet under the 'Removal of difficulties' article. But the major headaches affecting everybody are still there to deal with.

6. Now that the Congress Working Committee is meeting on the 12th, I shall be coming to Delhi on the 11th morning. We can then discuss the dates for the Congress session. I personally think that the third week of August would be the most suitable. This would give us a fortnight or so before the session of the Legislature. We could devote this period to dealing with many important problems that are bound to arise, both in the external and internal spheres, because once the Legislature starts we get so much involved in the rush of business that our normal work suffers tremendously. I agree that some time between the 15 and 20 September would be suitable for the session of the Legislature.

¹ President of Karnataka PCC; pioneered movement for separate Karnataka State; member, CA; Information & Broadcasting Minister, 1948-52; Governor of Bihar, 1952-57; President, Gandhi Peace Foundation and Gandhi Smarak Nidhi

7. I agree with you that Maulana, without much detriment to parliamentary business, could leave for the Middle East in the middle of September.

8. In your letter of 29 June, you have referred to the satisfactory attitude of the East Bengal Government. That attitude is of course matched by the equally satisfactory attitude of the West Bengal Government. The whole question is one of the attitude of the people. In that respect, I make bold to say that barring a few exceptions on our side—and I admit there are some big exceptions individually—our people have given and are giving the pact a fair trial, probably fairer than in East Bengal. We have been getting daily reports of incidents on the other side of the frontier. In the atmosphere which prevails whether in East or West Bengal, we cannot afford to ignore even minor incidents which have the consequence of creating a vague sense of insecurity, fear or alarm. When people have lost their nerves, even small incidents acquire tremendous significance. I do not know whether you have read a letter from one Afsaruddin Ahmed dated 10 June 1950. A copy was circulated by the DIB to Dharma Vira on 29 June 1950. That letter contains a survey of conditions both before and after the pact by a Muslim and can be taken to be fairly authentic. It confirms the many intelligence reports which we have been getting and also indicated that a great deal requires to be done in East Bengal before the general mentality of the people can approach that of ours in West Bengal. Unless this is done, any amount of goodwill and good intentions at the top in East Bengal is not likely to yield effective results.

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

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New Delhi
4 July 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thank you for your letter of 3 July. I have also, only now, received your letter of 5 June which was sent to Djakarta and missed me there.

In this letter to Djakarta you suggest the sending of a deputation of scholars from India to Indonesia to study their history

and their contacts with India. As a matter of fact what is required are archaeologists more than normal historians. That is why I took Chakravarti¹ with me, but owing to some misunderstanding he returned soon after I returned which was a very foolish thing to do, as I wanted him to stay on. I took also with me K.C. Neogy's son who is a promising archaeologist. I have left him there.

I think that the one step which will have a very good effect is to get some Indonesians, some young men from Bali, to come here for study for a while. In fact some Bali Hindus asked me about it. I said vaguely that they will be welcome. If we could provide a few scholarships here for Indonesians (I would not like to confine them to Bali, but Bali would be included), it will have a very good effect in Indonesia and ultimately on our contacts.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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Dehra Dun
6 July 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter dated 4 July 1950.

I agree with you that it would be best to send a team of archaeologists to Indonesia. It is a pity that Chakravarti should have returned so soon. The reason why I suggested a deputation of scholars also to go there was because I thought that there might be some documents and manuscripts, etc., in Indonesia which might be of value to us in reconstructing our ancient history, particularly in its "colonial aspect," and because I felt that similarities in customs, religious practices, archaeological monuments, architectural styles, etc., might suggest some new lines of thought to our historians. I would suggest even now that we consider sending down one or two eminent historians of ancient Hindu period.

I also agree that we should provide special facilities and some scholarships as well to students from Indonesia to come here and study ancient Indian history and culture. I think, for the time being, we should limit ourselves only to this aspect of scholarships. We can consider widening the scope if there is satisfactory response.

¹ Niranjan Prasad Chakravarti: Director-General of Archaeology in India, 1948-50

Perhaps in both these matters you would write to Maulana Sahib to see that something is really done.

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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Government House
Ooty
30 June 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Your letter of the 27th. I am glad the Matthai controversy is over.

The Korea situation is a cause for gravest apprehensions. Let us hope we shall be saved from a world burst up.

Coming to my own miserable affair, your letter was, as you say, not intended to upset me, but it did upset me as a matter of fact and I am still upset. Jawaharlal makes light of the affair as he is so anxious to have me at Delhi or rather to carry out what had been decided. You write that it was a warning to me and that you are resolved on facing the music should the trouble take shape.

But I am very unhappy. What is all this for? Is this strange experiment worth it?

You do not indicate who threw light on this matter. You must have weighed the reliability of the source before you thought fit to write to me suddenly now. My own feeling was and is that you did not display your usual judgment when you joined Jawaharlal in pressing this proposal on me. You showed a strange weakness when you dittoed it. Your good sense is now asserting itself. But even now you are setting it aside on account of your affection for Jawaharlalji.

I write this in a sort of thinking aloud, and to stimulate correct thinking and advice on your part.

I am leaving this place for Madras on 5 July. I shall await your reply there if you will kindly write after full thought.

Yours affectionately,
C. Rajagopalachari

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

New Delhi
9 July 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have just heard that you are returning tomorrow evening. I have, therefore, convened a meeting of the Cabinet day after tomorrow at 12 noon. This is chiefly to consider the question of holding a special session of Parliament to consider the international situation. We held an informal meeting of the party members today and about 44 were present. The general view was that a special session was necessary. I did not commit myself to anything and said that the matter would be considered by Cabinet. But I feel myself now that in view of the grave developments taking place a session will become inevitable. If so, the sooner we hold it the better. I think that the last week of July would probably be a suitable time. We can of course take up other urgent matters too and meet for about a fortnight.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

Dehra Dun
9 July 1950

My dear Mahtab,

The war clouds in Korea have set my mind thinking as to whether we are really equipping ourselves for a situation in which we might be cut off from the rest of the world and might, therefore, run short of essential defence or other stores. I have been wondering how we could make a survey of our actual requirements and also of our potentialities for making the deficiency good in the event of our being cut off either partially or wholly from the markets. Indirectly also, the problem arises because, in the event of ourselves getting involved in some sort of war, we

might have to depend more on our own resources. You know the partiality of certain powers for our neighbours.

It was while thinking on these lines that it struck me that we should have, as quickly as possible, an expert survey of our needs and of the means available to us to fulfil those needs. We are, of course, helpless where we cannot produce anything, but where we can, I think we should be in a position to switch over our industries to full production of those articles whenever we feel we are in a tight corner. We have, for instance, quite a number of defence items which we import from abroad, but which, if we look closely into our potentialities, we might be able to produce ourselves. I have already written to you separately about consumer goods and the need for a survey on certain well-defined lines. I think we should push on with that survey as well as this one and have some concrete plans and proposals reviewed and completed up to a stage, where we have only to implement it with the minimum margin of time.

I would, therefore, suggest to you seriously to consider the appointment of a small business-like committee, something on the lines of the Grady Mission which will survey our needs and suggest how, in the event of difficulties, we could make up our own deficiencies. I think it would be necessary to associate some scientists, particularly Dr. Kothari and Sir Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar. You can think it over and then, if necessary, we could discuss this in Delhi when I come there. Time is of the essence, and we should be rather quick about it.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri Harekrushna Mahtab
Minister for Industry & Supply
New Delhi

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New Delhi
13 July 1950

Revered Sardarji,

Your letter dated 9 July 1950. I entirely agree with you that immediate steps should be taken to prepare ourselves for all emergencies. On receipt of your letter, I have taken up the

matter and shall let you know in due course how I proceed and what is done.

Yours sincerely,
H. Mahtab

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

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New Delhi
18 August 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

At the Cabinet meeting today, we discussed our financial condition. We have often discussed this before. The position, as it appeared today, was little short of desperate and we had to face, as you know, some very painful dilemmas. There is no help for it but to make another and very earnest and, I hope, effective attempt at reduction of our normal expenditure in every ministry.

The Finance Minister has been asked to look into this matter and, if he considers it necessary, to appoint a special officer who should consult heads of departments etc. in an attempt to bring down expenditure. Ultimately, the responsibility lies with each ministry and unless the ministry itself makes that attempt, it will be difficult for an outside officer to do much.

I realise how difficult it is for many Ministries to make any vital change at the present moment. But we have no choice in the matter. We are being compelled to give up some of our most important and essential schemes. In fact most of our real nation-building activities are being starved. It is better for us to economise in our administrative apparatus than to stop important work. As a matter of fact, for the present, we have to do both.

I would, therefore, beg of you to give earnest thought to this matter in regard to your ministry and to advise your secretaries to take immediate steps in regard to it.

I have sent this letter to all our colleagues in the Cabinet.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

New Delhi
29 August 1950

My dear Iengar,

I am sending herewith a copy of a letter which I have received from H.M. (Finance). I know you are already fully conscious of the need for economy and I do not think I need stress it any further. I am also aware of the fact that a great deal has already been done in our Ministry to reduce expenditure substantially, but I would be glad if you would please examine further possibilities of economy even though it might not be possible on the staff side. By vigilant care and deep examination it might be possible to make substantial reductions in other charges. Our aim should be to bring about the maximum possible saving and, as soon as you are clear in your mind about the possibilities, you might get in touch with K.R.K. Menon.¹

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri H. V. R. Iengar, ICS
Secretary
Home Ministry
New Delhi

New Delhi
29 August 1950

My dear Menon,

I am sending herewith a copy of a letter which I have received from H.M. (Finance). I know you are already fully conscious of the need for economy and I do not think I need stress it any further. I am also aware of the fact that a great deal has already been done in our Ministry to reduce expenditure substantially, but I would be glad if you would please examine further possibilities

¹ Commissioner of Income-tax, Bombay, 1939-41; member, Central Board of Revenue, 1947-48; Finance Secretary

of economy even though it might not be possible on the staff side. By vigilant care and deep examination it might be possible to make substantial reductions in other charges. Our aim should be to bring about the maximum possible saving and, as soon as you are clear in your mind about the possibilities, you might get in touch with K.R.K. Menon.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri V. P. Menon
Secretary
Ministry of States
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

New Delhi
26 August 1950

we can afford to be satisfied with the oft-repeated slogan that economy cannot be achieved except at the expense of efficiency. We cannot also now afford to take the view that any economy which may be possible by the retrenchment of staff is not worth achieving. We must gear ourselves now to a strong and determined effort to save every pie that we can possibly lay our hands on, be it expenditure on staff, on stores, on travelling allowances or on contingencies. A campaign of this kind can never be successful unless every one from the Secretary down to the humblest clerk in each ministry makes up his mind to attack the problem with vigour and determination. It must be obvious to every one of the Government's employees that we are now at a critical stage of our fortunes, and that unless every one of us puts his shoulder to the wheel we should go down in the mud. An Economy Officer, however much he tries, will not be able to achieve anything worth the name unless he has the active and enthusiastic co-operation of every one of the Secretaries. He will no doubt be able to throw up useful hints regarding possible avenues of economy, and he will also be able, by co-ordinating the suggestions received from the various ministries, to function as a sort of clearing house of the suggestions received from them. My idea is that Menon should, after he has collected the suggestions received from the various Secretaries and sorted them out, contact the Secretary of each ministry, in turn, and discuss further possible economies, and then finalise the proposals in regard to each ministry. As you will see, he will need the good-will and co-operation of all the Secretaries to enable him to get through this work quickly and thoroughly, and I trust that both these will be forthcoming in abundance.

Please don't bother to acknowledge this as I am off to Europe tomorrow morning. You might perhaps like to ask your Secretary to get in touch with Menon as soon as he has had the time to look round and formulate even a tentative scheme for economy in his Secretariat and in the attached and subordinate offices. If you wish to talk matters over with Menon yourself he will of course be at your disposal.

Yours sincerely,
C. D. Deshmukh

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

New Delhi

31 January 1950

My dear Gadgil,

I wrote to you some time ago about exploring the possibility of dispersing some of our offices to some of the Indian States where vacant accommodation might be available as a result of integration. Quite a few months have elapsed since then and I should like to know what progress you have made in this project.

I understand that there is an idea of bringing back the Auditor-General's office from Simla to Delhi. If it is true, it is a very tall order because I understand the office is quite a big one. If it has been functioning for seven or eight years from Simla, I see no overriding necessity of bringing it down to Delhi. It would definitely be a retrograde step and I think that if we bring down that office from Simla we would be discouraging the staff in Delhi from moving out. After all, the latter have been staying in Delhi which makes their claim to stay on stronger than that of Auditor-General's office or any other office already located in Simla to come down from there. I hope no final decision has been reached on this matter.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri N. V. Gadgil
Minister for Works, Mines & Power
New Delhi

CHAPTER XIII
GOVERNOR'S POSITION

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Government House
Cuttack
5 March 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

In continuation of my letter of 14 February to the President, I enclose a copy of a further letter which I have sent to the Prime Minister. I have raised a few more points in this letter, which I am sure will engage your attention from an administrative point of view. I shall be in Delhi from the 16th to the 21st, and shall seek an early opportunity of meeting you, when I may explain to you why I am insisting on these points. It is, as you know, not a matter in which I have any personal interest. I am worried about the developments inside the party in power in different provinces and the complications which, [with the help of] a guiding hand, could be minimised. But I shall postpone further comments till our personal meeting in Delhi.

I am beginning to feel a bit worn out, and have asked Jawahar to consider the question of letting me off for May and June for a holiday abroad. You just cannot imagine the strain of utter loneliness, which is worse than solitary confinement here. Even in prisons one had some company, but here I am worse than a solitary prisoner. I do my work, and even more in all possible ways: but after all a human being requires some company and a little relaxation. That is why I am longing for a couple of months' leave.

With the best regards, both for you and Maniben,
Yours sincerely,
Asaf

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister of India
New Delhi

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ENCLOSURE

Government House
Cuttack
4 March 1950

Dear Prime Minister,

I thank you for your letter of 21 February with its enclosures. I am grateful for the clarification of some of the points mentioned in my original reference, and I hope the few comments which I offer now by way of seeking further clarification will be considered by you or by your legal advisers. I am afraid, in spite of the two opinions forwarded with your letters a further reference is necessary. All the points raised have not been fully answered, and since then a closer study of the Constitution has brought to light a few more points which call for clarification. Dr. Ambedkar says that the Governors are bound to accept the advice of the Council of Ministers. My question was whether they are bound to accept the advice of the Council of Ministers even if it militates against the Constitution and the best interests of the people of a state or of the Union Government. There is no specific provision in the Constitution for the categorical imperative suggested, but naturally the inherent sanctions of democracy will operate, and no Governor will be so foolish as to turn down the advice of the Council of Ministers if they are in full enjoyment of the confidence of a majority, and act on his own. Dr. Ambedkar has said that the position of the Governors is analogous to that of the British Crown. Even so, we cannot overlook the points of difference which the analogy carries. The British King is in no case expected to take over the administration of the Government, whereas the President of the Union is expected to do so in case of a breakdown in a State. Naturally the Governor would be required in such a case to administer the State with the help of such Advisers as may be appointed by him under the direction of the President. This, to my mind, lays upon him the responsibility of keeping himself fully acquainted with "the limbs of the administration," i.e. the secretaries, the heads of departments, and the officers in charge of districts. For this purpose he must know them personally. If he grants interviews to secretaries, it will be only to acquire a personal impression of those incumbents and not to intrigue against the Ministry. To guard against any possible misunderstanding, such interviews should be subject to the general concurrence of the Chief Ministers. To imagine that an awkward situation will be created if the Governor interviews secretaries and heads of departments seems to be based on the assumption that the Governor will be acting against the Ministry and not to help them. It was never

suggested that the Governor should pass orders independently, or should instruct secretaries to act in a certain way. The kind of contact that was contemplated was by way of calling secretaries for routine interviews from time to time regularly as the situation may require. Further, such a procedure would enable the Governor to obtain the necessary information about the working of different departments without much redtape, involving the passage of various files to and fro, which may impose an extra burden on the secretarial and clerical staff.

2. As regards the other provisions of the Constitution which relate to the High Court and the Public Service Commission, obviously the Constitution contemplates the fullest impartiality and independence of these two, and would not permit their being, in any way, subject to the influence of the party Government of the day. The High Court is the last refuge of the citizen in respect of impartial justice, and the Public Service Commission the final court of appeal of the permanent services. If, for instance, there arises the question of appointing a High Court judge, and the President consults the Chief Justice and the Governor, if the Governor is compelled to accept the advice of his Ministers, the judge so appointed will owe his appointment to the Ministry and, therefore, I cannot conceive how we can expect certain members of the Bar not to seek to ingratiate themselves with the Ministry in anticipation. Relations between the judiciary, especially the High Courts, and the executive are none too cordial in certain States, and a deadlock can arise. This argument applies with equal force to the Members of the Public Service Commission. Again, the Speakers' Conference has laid it down that the Speaker's secretariat or the secretariat of the Legislature should be independent of the Executive Government of the day. The Speaker is expected to frame the rules (unless the Legislature does so) for the recruitment, appointment, etc., of his staff, and these rules have to be approved by the Governor. If the Governor is again bound to accept the advice of his Ministers in this respect, except in so far as the question of finance goes, it would hardly be consistent with the independence of the Legislature's secretariat. Again, take the question of the scheduled tribes and scheduled castes. There is a special provision laid down in Schedule V of the Constitution for their welfare. Quite obviously if the Governor is bound to accept the advice of his Ministers, which it is quite conceivable may not be entirely consistent with the wishes of the tribes themselves, the protection which is sought to be guaranteed to them will become illusory. I have in view a concrete example. After the merger, 31 new members had to be nominated to our Legislature, and out of these 19 should have gone to the scheduled tribes. The Premier and other Ministers of the Council entirely agreed with me that an earnest effort should be made to select a fair number of suitable persons out of the tribesmen. Both political expediency and the constitutional right of the tribals demanded this. However, when the question was debated by the party, they reduced the number to only two, much to the disappointment of vocal

tribal leaders. Today there are not more than seven tribal representatives in a House of 91, in spite of the fact that according to the electoral roll now prepared for the next general election they are entitled to at least 37 seats. Now if an Advisory Council is to be appointed by the Governor on the advice of the Ministers, although according to Schedule V three-fourths of the maximum number should be appointed from among tribal representatives in the Legislature, we have not more than seven to think of. This may mean that only two other members have to be appointed, and instead of 20, which is the statutory maximum, there will be a Council of only 9. I consider this a most unsatisfactory arrangement. No blame attaches to the Ministers, but the sense of political responsibility among certain party men is such that one does not know what pressure they will bring to bear on the Ministers to accept their nominees. This would defeat the very purpose the Constitution contemplates. I would be grateful for an answer to the question—whether the Governor should or should not exercise his influence with his Ministry and persuade them to concede the constitutional rights of the tribals and the scheduled castes, and save the Ministry from party pressure. In other words, he should be the safety valve of the Ministry. There are several other matters which arise out of the Constitution, which require further clarification. I attach hereto a list of the various articles of the Constitution relating to the Governors of States. Against each one of them I have made a brief remark to suggest in which cases the Governor should exercise his discretionary influence. They relate mostly to the High Court, the Public Service Commission, and the scheduled tribes; also to the Speaker's secretariat. For the rest I entirely endorse the legal opinion so far received, that besides keeping a watchful eye on all developments and discretely exercising his influence with his Ministers the Governor should normally accept their advice as a matter of course, but tactfully help them with his experience and advice.

With assurances of high esteem,

Yours sincerely,
M. Asaf Ali

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister of India
New Delhi

New Delhi
10 March 1950

My dear Asaf Ali,

Thank you for your letter of 5 March 1950.

2. The questions which you raised are undoubtedly important and deserve a great deal of attention. The constitutional position is delicate and we have to so arrange matters that Governors do not become subjects of public controversy or public gossip. However we shall discuss it when you all come to Delhi. I am sorry to hear that you feel the strain of loneliness and have been driven to ask for a change.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Mr. Asaf Ali
Governor of Orissa
Cuttack

New Delhi
31 January 1950

My dear Sri Prakasa,

Some time ago, you wrote to me about authority for yourself to book up to a maximum of six seats for yourself and your party whenever you decide to go on tour by air by a scheduled service and to be free to determine the composition of your own party. We have now issued orders giving you the necessary authority, and an official letter was issued to the Chief Secretary to the Government of Assam on 28 January.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Shri Sri Prakasa
Governor of Assam
Shillong

2 King Edward Road
New Delhi
17 August 1950

My dear Sardar Sahib,

You may perhaps recollect that I had troubled you from Shillong about a Governor's privileges as regards his party when travelling about, and you had very kindly and generously put matters right by your ruling that a Governor could travel about with a party consisting of not more than six members and you also gave him the privilege of choosing his own party. I scarcely travelled in a party of more than three, including myself, the others being one personal servant or chaprasi, and one ADC or Secretary. Sometimes if any member of my family happened to be there—son, daughter or daughter-in-law—he or she also formed a member of the party.

Here I find that a Cabinet Minister can take a railway saloon but no one can travel with him. If anyone travels, a first-class fare has to be paid for him. The other day when coming back from Banaras, a member of my family travelled with me and I paid a first-class fare for her. I also understand that when the Prime Minister or yourself travel, and Indiraji or Maniben are also travelling, full fares have to be paid for them. I know it may be embarrassing for you to give a decision on this matter but I do think that the position needs reconsideration.

When a saloon is going where there are various compartments and berths, or when a chartered aeroplane is going, I do not see why if members of the family of Ministers are also travelling, they should have to pay any fares. I can understand that when Ministers are travelling by service planes, they may pay for members of their family who may be travelling with them though I think even there perhaps a small concession would not be improper.

I do not, however, press for that but I cannot help feeling that concession might be made where a railway saloon or a chartered plane is used. A chartered plane, in the very nature of things, will be a rarity, for it is only used on very special occasions; but railway saloons will be often in use and perhaps Cabinet Ministers could be permitted to take members of their families to

the extent of the berths provided without being charged. A limit of two or even three should not be regarded as too many.

You will please pardon me for troubling you but I felt that the rules in this behalf could be reasonably reconsidered. I may state that Sir James Grigg, when he was Finance Minister here, told me that before his time, wives of Ministers could travel with them in the saloons free; but when Zafrullah [Khan] arrived with two wives, Government felt that that was a little too much and so they withdrew all concessions; and the fares of everybody, except the Executive Councillor himself, had to be paid for.

With respectful regards,

I am,
Yours sincerely,
Sri Prakasa

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

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2 King Edward Road
New Delhi
19 August 1950

My dear Sardar Sahib,

The other day I sent a letter to you regarding the desirability of allowing Cabinet Ministers when using railway saloons to take some members of their families with them if necessary. I forgot to mention therein that in case you should think that this would not be desirable and that Ministers should pay for all members of their families travelling with them, I should like to suggest that they may at least be given the concession of only paying intermediate or at best second-class tickets. So many of us have been used to travelling in those classes in private life and would be going back to them on relinquishing these offices. It is indeed hard to have to pay first-class fares for every member of one's family.

I may also add that Ministers can travel in cars; and when they do so, there is no objection to their having members of their families with them. Perhaps a similar concession could be granted while they are travelling by train. I am very sorry to trouble you with such a small matter and I hope you will please excuse.

With respectful regards,

I am,
Yours sincerely,
Sri Prakasa

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
21 August 1950

My dear Sri Prakasa,

Thank you for your letters of 17 and 19 August 1950 about the use of saloons by Cabinet Ministers.

I myself have strong feelings against the use of saloons by Cabinet Ministers and, until my health made it impossible for me to do otherwise, I never used the saloon or a chartered plane. Even now I avoid the use of saloon whenever rarely I have to travel and I am content with a compartment. However, I appreciate the difficulties pointed out by you and am in correspondence with the Prime Minister. I shall let you know the result in due course.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri Sri Prakasa
Minister for Commerce
New Delhi

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Camp Bombay
6 September 1950

My dear Sri Prakasa,

Please refer to your letters of 17 and 19 August regarding the use of saloons by Cabinet Ministers.

2. I have consulted the Prime Minister also. We both feel that though it is sometimes hard, it is a salutary rule to ensure that a privilege is not abused. We both are against encouraging the use of saloons at all and feel that any further liberalisation

of the rules in regard to saloons would be a progress in the reverse direction to what we intend.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri Sri Prakasa
New Delhi

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New Delhi
23 January 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I read yesterday a letter which the Chief Justice of India wrote to you in regard to the Madras judges of the High Court. This was in the file that came to me in connection with making these judges permanent. I must say that I was shocked to read this letter. It exhibited a mentality which is very far from being judicial and is totally unbecoming in any person holding a responsible position, more specially a judge of a supreme tribunal. I am disturbed about this matter. I do not know what we can do about it but I wanted to put before you my own reaction.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
23 January 1950

My dear Rajaji,

I am sending herewith a copy of the letter which I have received from Jawaharlal and of my reply thereto. Jawaharlal is naturally upset, but I am sure you will agree that we must allow the storm to blow over.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

H.E. Shri C. Rajagopalachari
Governor-General of India
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE I

New Delhi
23 January 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I am deeply shocked by the attitude taken up by Chief Justice Kania in regard to Justice Bashir Ahmed. I wrote to you today about his previous note on the file. His letter to you of today's date confirms me in the opinion that Chief Justice Kania's approach is completely unjudicial and indeed improper. It is a matter of the most serious importance for us to consider whether a person who functions in this improper way is fit enough to be the head of the judiciary in India.

I have had many occasions in the past to feel disturbed about Chief Justice Kania's work and I came to the conclusion some time ago that this was certainly not up to the standard that was necessary for such a high position. These recent developments have convinced me of this still more. I have discussed this matter with H.E. the Governor-General and I find that he is, if possible even more strongly, of the same opinion. In view of these facts we should ask Chief Justice Kania to resign. It would be a great risk to make him the permanent Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India. I entirely agree with him. How this is to be done is not quite clear to me. But if you like, you can discuss this matter with the Governor-General and even mention it in Cabinet. In any event I should like you to give immediate consideration to it.

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE II

New Delhi
23 January 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter of 23 January 1950. I am sending herewith a copy of the reply which I have sent to the Chief Justice. I have told Ienger to go ahead with the appointment.

I share your criticism of the manner in which Chief Justice Kania has approached this question. In fact, I told him on the telephone that any rejection of Justice Rashid Ahmed at this stage could reasonably be regarded as being based on communal grounds. At the same time, I feel that any precipitate action such as you have suggested would definitely put us in the wrong. To some extent, such indiscretions on the part of a man in the position of a Chief Justice of India have to be tolerated. Any other attitude would render us liable to be charged with interference with the judiciary. After all, asking Chief Justice Kania to resign does not mean that he would resign. If he does not, we merely get a rebuff, because we cannot carry our direction to its logical conclusion, namely, dismiss him. I am fully conscious of his faults, but, on the whole, I think I have been able to manage him. This is the only time when he has pressed his views to this extent; otherwise, in the past he has generally deferred to my views; or, indeed, to your views whenever you had any occasion to discuss matters with him. He is sensitive on certain points. He is even liable to become petty-minded and persist in his attitude; but that, unfortunately, is a trait not uncommon with some heads of the judiciary who feel that they have the sole monopoly of upholding its independence, integrity and purity. In any case, I do not think it is a matter which we can mention to the Cabinet. If you like, we can discuss it tomorrow with the Governor-General. On the whole, however, I would prefer if you would agree to allow the breeze to pass over.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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Government House
New Delhi
23 January 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Your letter. I adhere to the view already expressed. I spoke to the Prime Minister and he holds the same opinion. I am surprised at the attitude of the Chief Justice of India, but I have no doubt in my mind we have to carry out our previous decision.

Yours sincerely,
C. Rajagopalachari

New Delhi
28 December 1949

My dear Dr. Subbarayan,

Thank you for your letter of 23 December 1949.

2. I am sorry I could not see you before you left, though I wanted so much to see you. Jawaharlal spoke to me about the urgency of sending an Ambassador to Indonesia and I suggested your name. This was partly because I felt that in the present circumstances, you would be a very suitable choice and partly because your own attempts to serve your province in a suitable capacity had been thwarted for reasons which you know. I have no doubt that you have made the right choice. After all, if you do not find a suitable opportunity for service in your own province, you can legitimately look forward to serve your country in a wider sphere. If I were here and you had referred to me, I would have certainly advised you to accept the job.

3. I have no doubt that you will have a warm welcome from our Indonesian friends. When you meet Dr. Hatta, please tell him I am very sorry I missed seeing him last time but hope to see him whenever he passes through Delhi again. I am also looking forward to President Soekarno's visit whenever that may materialise.

While in Indonesia, I should like you to make some research, if time permits, into its past association with India. It would be a fascinating subject for study and might throw light on our ancient achievements. I do not know what scope there is for Indian research students in this aspect of world's history. You will doubtless find it and in case there is any scope for this kind of research, I think we should send competent scholars from here to do this research.

4. You will have also to guard against Pakistan's attempts to spread their Pan-Islamism in Indonesia. Our previous reports indicate that these attempts were being made and they were seeking to spread the poison of "Hindu heathenism" in Indonesia also. With the Hindu cultural background of the Indonesians, I am confident that if we are sufficiently vigilant these attempts will prove abortive.

With kindest regards to both of you,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Dr. P. Subbarayan
Ambassador for India in Indonesia
Batavia

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Embassy of India
Djakarta
3 January 1950

My dear Sardarji,

I have your very kind letter in reply to mine. It is indeed kind of you to have mentioned my name to the Prime Minister in connection with the position of Ambassador here. To be frank with you, I personally would have preferred to remain at home, though, as you yourself have pointed out, the people in the province did not do anything which could have kept me in provincial politics. As I had told you, I intended to come to the Central Parliament, as for nearly 30 years now I have been interested in parliamentary practice, and I would very much like to have continued even as a private member as that might have given me opportunities of doing service in the parliamentary field, but when this offer was made and, as I had already refused other assignments, I felt in fairness I should accept this place and try to do what I can.

It is a very difficult assignment as you yourself have pointed out. There is intense Pakistan propaganda that this is a Muslim State and should line up with other Muslim States in the world. There is an intensely communal movement in this country, which goes by the name of Darul Islam, and I believe representatives of this organisation met Pakistan representatives almost every evening when they were here for the inauguration ceremonies. I know very well that they will try and spread the cry of heathenism, as you have rightly pointed out, but, on the other side, there is plenty of goodwill for us, as there is a feeling in the present that we have done everything in our power to advance the cause of Indonesian independence. Along with this, there is the feeling that the American representative, Mr. Cochran, who is the first Ambassador from America to Indonesia, did a lot to

smoothen out difficulties specially at the Hague conference. That is one of the main reasons I am told why he was given the first place among the Ambassadors, apart from the High Commissioner for the Netherlands, who, naturally, was given precedence before him as there is the Netherlands-Indonesian Union. The situation, in my view, is no doubt difficult and I am new to diplomacy, but I mean to do the best I can to advance the interests of our country.

There is plenty of evidence of the bringing in of our culture from the very earliest times. Most of the books on this matter are in Dutch, with which I am not acquainted. If we could contract to send an archaeologist of standing with a knowledge of Dutch and he could visit the many important places on these islands, which bear signs of our civilization, we might be able to know more about it. I do not know whether this would be possible in the present financial situation in which we find ourselves. It will be best if students followed after this preliminary investigation has been completed. I shall, of course, keep in my own mind what you have said as this is a field of investigation which ought to be of great interest to our country.

I hope to be back in Delhi for the inauguration of our Republic when I will, of course, meet you and discuss further with you the possibilities of this investigation.

With my kindest regards to Manibenji and pranams to you,
Yours affectionately,
P. Subbarayan

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New Delhi
26 February 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I enclose a copy of a letter I have received from our High Commissioner in London regarding the issue of Letters of Commission by the President and the King respectively. I am sending a copy to the President and a copy to the Law Minister. After we have received any comments from the Law Ministry, we can consider this matter.

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

India House
Aldwych
London WC 2
17 February 1950

My dear Prime Minister,

I enclose drafts of Letters of Commission to be issued by the President and the King respectively.

I request that these may not be treated as British drafts, they are the result of a round-table discussion in which neither side has taken a party view. I hope you will regard it as satisfactory. These drafts are being informally placed before the King at the same time as they are being sent to you by me for the President.

As soon as your reply, which it is requested may be sent by immediate telegram, is received, the King will be formally asked and you will no doubt do similarly.

This is called the issue of a Commission rather than a Letter of Credence, which term is not derived from any relation to the High Commissioner. There is, however, no reference to it in the text, but it is proposed that that is how it should be known.

As agreed at Colombo, the question of designation is held over for the present. This Commission accredits representatives of the countries concerned and marks the departure from the informal or merely governmental arrangement which now exists for High Commissioners. You will note that the term used in the draft is "accredited representative and plenipotentiary, etc.," which is the full function of an Ambassador. No reference is made either to the High Commissioner or Ambassador. It is suggested that the R and P in "representative and plenipotentiary" should be in small letters and not capitals, so that there may be no confusion by the term "representative" being regarded as a title.

Reference is made in the last paragraph to the King in the terms which I mentioned to you in Colombo. You will notice that it is in terms of your April Declaration and it does not place the representative in any relation to the King but merely contains one more felicitous expression of amity. You will also notice that in the last paragraph in both drafts the term "our Commonwealth" is used in exactly the same way. The King's "our" not referring to the royal "we" but "our" in the plural. This was considered not only a

happy solution but it was necessary to avoid the term "British" and the expression, "the Commonwealth." It also brought out the equality of the President and the King as heads of independent States.

In the draft for [Sir Archibald] Nye the last paragraph says, "Given at our Court of St. James's, etc.," no parallel to which appears in ours. If you decide to add something of this kind your Legal Department will no doubt provide the words. It may be, "Given at the President's House, New Delhi", "... at the Red Fort" or whatever it is, or merely "Given at New Delhi", and simply "in the year so and so."

Yours sincerely,

V. K. Krishna Menon

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister
New Delhi

HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA TO
HIS MAJESTY KING GEORGE THE SIXTH

Sendeth Greeting

Great and Good Friend,

Being desirous of making suitable provision for the representation in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland of the interests of the Republic of India and for the maintenance of the relations of amity and concord which so happily subsist between our two countries I have to that end made choice of my trusted and worthy countryman (name) to be the accredited representative and plenipotentiary of the Republic of India in the United Kingdom.

The personal qualities of (name) and his long experience of affairs of State assure me that he is eminently worthy of the important mission for which he has been selected, and that he will discharge the duties of his high office in a manner that will fully merit Your Majesty's approbation and esteem.

New Delhi
5 May 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter of 1 May 1950. I should have replied to you earlier, but I have been very busy with so many consultations and could not, therefore, write to you.

2. So far as I have been able to gather, the information which you require is as follows:

- (a) on 6 December 1948, Rana Mahavir Shumshere Jung Bahadur and Subia Shumshere Jung Bahadur Rana each gave a sum of Rs. 25,000 for the National Herald;
- (b) Another sum of Rs. 25,000 was given by Subia Shumshere Jung Bahadur on 2 December 1949.

These two gentlemen are connected with Himalayan Airways who, as you know, were given night air mail charter in circumstances which are known to you. Their charter was renewed last January. Previous to this charter, they did not come to notice for any prominent civil aviation activity. In fact, there were adverse reports against them, one of which, I understand, came from the Indian Air Force.

- (c) On 13 July 1948, Messrs. Indian Overseas Airlines, Messrs. Akhani & Sons Ltd., Messrs. Exchange Bank of India and Africa Ltd., Messrs. Dawoodi Haji Nasir & Co. and Messrs. Union Life and General Insurance Co. Ltd. made a contribution of Rs. 5,000 each to the National Herald. I do not know about others, but Messrs. Indian Overseas Airlines, Messrs. Akhani & Sons Ltd. and M/s Exchange Bank of India and Africa Ltd., are all connected with the operations of Akhani whose first firm secured the night air mail contract in January 1949 without any advertisement or tenders being invited and in circumstances which evoked not only protests but veiled allegations of manoeuvrings from firms like the Tatas and the Air Services of India. I am told that Mr. Akhani was responsible for arranging for other contributions also. The fact that these contributions are on the same date

and from Bombay is significant. The company went into liquidation only about a month after the contract was given.

- (d) Husainbhai Lalji made a contribution of Rs. 5,000 on 13 July 1948. I state this because I am told that this was also arranged through Akhani. It may or may not have been done so, but this gentleman has been involved in a case of cheating the Government and has made frantic efforts to have the case withdrawn, which I have consistently refused to. The case against him and his four sons is now committed to the Sessions Court, Bombay.

With the background of the case relating to contribution which was accepted from J. P. Srivastava,¹ it is natural that these credits to the National Herald should be taken to be connected with official favours received by the gentlemen mentioned above. I have already impressed upon you the harmful effects which such activities must necessarily involve on the reputation of Government. It is also bound to subject ourselves to criticism for the manner in which the National Herald is securing assistance from persons who are associated with the activities of Government. I need hardly add to what I have already told you on this subject.

As far as I have been able to gather, Rafi's activities on behalf of the National Herald involve him much deeper than would be in his interests as a private citizen. As a member of Government those activities, I am constrained to say, are quite improper. It is our rule that once a member enters Government, he has to absolve himself from all responsibility for commercial activities of this kind and has to resign directorship, etc. It does not seem that Rafi has resigned the directorship of the National Herald even up to now, though on my return from Lucknow I told him clearly that he should resign and he said he would do so. The instances of such activities of his that have come to my notice are many, but I have selected only those for which information seemed reliable and which directly concerned persons who were involved in the operations of his department.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

¹ Industrialist of Kanpur; Food Member, Central Government, in World War II

New Delhi
5 May 1950

My dear Vallabhhhai,

Thank you for your letter of 5 May about various contributions to the National Herald. I have had no time to enquire deeply into this matter, but as Feroze Gandhi happened to be here I asked him about it.

He tells me that about two years ago the two Ranas you mention promised to take Rs. 1 lakh worth of preference shares in the National Herald. He did not see the Ranas and Rafi Ahmed had nothing to do with it. A young Nepal Congress worker, Suraj Upadhyaya, who was with Feroze in prison, used to see him from time to time. It was Suraj Upadhyaya who promised on behalf of the Ranas to have these shares taken. This was about the middle of 1948. Some months later Rs. 50,000 worth of shares were actually taken and allotted to the two Ranas. About a year later further preference shares for 25,000 were taken in fulfilment of the previous promise. At the same time the Ranas said they would not be able to take more shares.

Feroze tells me that about two years ago he and Mridula went to Bombay to sell some shares of the National Herald. They went to Mulraj. He promised to help them. They saw also Hussainbhoy Laljee and Kamani. These three persons helped to sell some shares among Bombay business people. Actually they did not meet the other people. I am informed that Rafi Ahmed had practically nothing to do with this matter. The contributions, according to the figures you have given, are relatively small.

I do not know what possible connection there is between these contributions and the night air mail contract which came long afterwards. I have an idea, though I am not sure, that Himalayan Airways started some time afterwards also.

The fact that the contributions are on or about the same date is explained by Mridula and Feroze going to Bombay about that time.

It is not quite clear from the information that Feroze gave me as to what connection, if any, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai had with any of these matters. According to him, he had practically no connection. It is possible, however, that he may have spoken to Mulraj at some time or the other.

I entirely agree with you that there should be considerable strictness about Members of Government receiving any monies even for charitable purposes from industrialists and others who may have business with Government. It would be a good thing if some rules were laid down for this purpose, otherwise it is difficult to draw the line. We all of us sometimes receive contributions for charitable funds or like purposes. Should they all be refused or should they be accepted in certain circumstances?

I agree with you that it was not right for Rafi Ahmed to continue as director of the National Herald after he became Minister. I told him so myself and ultimately he did resign.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
6 May 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter dated 5 May 1950. When I wrote to you giving these details, I did not feel that it would require me to give any elaborate justification in favour of the view that the transactions were objectionable. That is why I did not deal with the point at length. There are two points of principle involved. One is the collection of contributions from persons who are involved in the operations of the Minister's own department. There can be no doubt that the two Ranases and Akhani were so involved. They were running airlines and, irrespective of the charter for night air mail, had day-to-day business with the department over which the Hon'ble Minister presides. It is also an open secret that the Hon'ble Minister's association with the National Herald has all along been close and intimate. Obligations and associations of this character are not necessarily objectionable merely if they take place near enough a particular official transaction. Even spread over certain periods

they provide opportunities for the persons concerned to create a vested interest in the department.

The second point of principle would refer to such transactions taking place near about a particular official transaction in which the donors might be interested. You say that Himalayan Airways started some time afterwards. One of the transactions you will recall relates to 2 December 1949. Himalayan Airways renewed their charter for night air mail in January 1950 and since October 1949 their charter had already been going on.

As I wrote to you, I left out of account contributions which did not come from those who were concerned with the operations of the department; otherwise my information is that the number of contributions actually received was sufficiently large and covered others as well.

You have referred to contributions for charitable purposes from industrialists and others who might have business with Government. The transactions which I referred to you are of a different nature. There is no question of charity about it. I do feel, however, that any contributions made to charitable objects in the public manner cannot and need not be objected to. A Minister would, of course, have to consider whether the timing of any of the contributions is such as might be embarrassing to Government. Short of that I see no objection in principle and I do not think that any sensible man should object.

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister
New Delhi

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New Delhi
6 May 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thank you for your letter of 6 May about the contributions to the National Herald. The principle you lay down, that is of collecting any money from persons who are involved in the operations of a Minister's department, is obviously sound. But it is not quite clear always how to apply it. For instance, the two Ranas had nothing to do, so far as I know, with any airline or with the Communications Department at the time they promised

to purchase preference shares in the Herald. Nor, according to what Feroze has told me, had Rafi Ahmed Kidwai anything to do with them at the time in this connection.

I have had absolutely no contact with the Herald for the last 3½ years or more and have not even had any particular information as to how it was being carried on. I understand from time to time Feroze or Mridula or Raghunandan Saran or some others went about selling its shares in various places.

Generally the shares sold were for small amounts. It is quite possible that Rafi Ahmed might have mentioned this matter to some people. But I do not see the connection between these contributions and the air services. As I wrote to you, the Ranas promised their contribution long before any air service connected with them came into the picture. It is true that they gave part of this contribution afterwards, namely, in December 1949. It would have been better, I think, for the Herald not to have accepted this. As a matter of fact the Herald is a fairly good business proposition and its preference shares and debentures are not a bad investment.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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Camp Bombay
10 May 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter of 6 May 1950 regarding the National Herald.

2. In view of the position which you have taken up, I feel it useless to pursue the matter further. I have already told you how I view these activities and that it is doubtful if in any other province if I had anything to do with this matter, this position would have been tolerated by me. You seem to suggest that contributions come to the National Herald because it is a fairly good business proposition and its preference shares and debentures are not a bad investment. My own information gathered from those who have invested in the National Herald indicates otherwise. You also wrote to me that Rafi had resigned his directorship. I do not know when he did so, but I get

evidence of his close and intimate contact with the National Herald even now.

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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New Delhi
8 April 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Some time ago I received some information concerning the activities of Mullaji Sahib of the Bohra community and some of his close relations. I passed it on to Morarji [Desai] for investigation. I am enclosing a copy of the letter which I have received from Morarji and of the further reports which we received from the Government of Bombay. I consulted the Custodian-General, a copy of whose letter I enclose. My own feeling is that we must allow the law on evacuee property to take its course and if Mullaji Sahib and members of his family have in any way contravened the law or come within its four corners, we should not interfere. Quite naturally the Government of Bombay do not wish to take up this matter if they are compelled subsequently to withdraw from the proceedings. They would, therefore, like to have an assurance that we would not intervene in this matter. My own feeling is that we should not, but before writing to Morarji I thought I would consult you.

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

Secretariat
Bombay
12 January 1950

My dear Sardar Vallabhbhai,

Please refer to your letter of 23 November 1949 in regard to the activities of Mullaji Sahib.

2. Enquiries made through the Commissioner of Police have revealed that some property has been purchased by Mullaji Sahib and members of his family in Karachi and that his son Yusufbhai has purchased some ginning and pressing factories, two rolling mills and two printing presses in Karachi in the name of Saifce Development Corporation Ltd. It is also learnt that some of his other relatives have gone to East Africa with their wives and it is suspected that their intention is to settle down in Africa or in Pakistan and invest their monies in suitable business there.

There seems sufficient material to declare Mullaji Sahib and his two sons as intending evacuees, and it is therefore proposed to take action against them accordingly under Section 19 of the Administration of Evacuee Property Ordinance, 1949, but before such action is taken I intend to call him and to advise him to desist from such disloyal conduct and to ask him to recall his son and other relatives to India and to dispose of the properties purchased by them in Pakistan and elsewhere. I would make it clear to him that if he takes no heed of the advice given to him, we would take necessary action under the law. It is possible that when a regular enquiry is made under the provisions of section 19 of the Ordinance, evidence may be forthcoming which would make it necessary for us to notify the property of Mullaji Sahib and his relatives as evacuee property. I, however, hope that Mullaji Sahib will see sense and retrace the steps he has taken.

3. If we do not [act] promptly, it is possible that some more relatives and other followers of Mullaji Sahib will leave India and manage to invest their monies in foreign countries. As Mullaji Sahib is the religious head of the Dawoodi Bohra community, I would request you kindly to let me know as soon as possible if the Government of India would have any objection to the course we propose to adopt for preventing the flight of capital from India and the possible use of a part of it for purposes of anti-India propaganda.

Yours sincerely,
Morarji Desai

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

New Delhi
8 April 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have your letter of 8 April about Mullaji Sahib of the Bohra community. I have no sympathy for the Mullaji and I have little doubt that he is doing something undesirable. It is not quite clear to me, however, how we can come in the way of a person sending money to Africa or opening business there. I suppose sending money to Karachi would be different.

It would certainly be a good thing for Morarji Desai to send for him and warn him and in fact to ask him what exactly he is up to. Later, if necessary, action can be taken against him under the Evacuee Properties Ordinance. There is no doubt, however, that such action would shake up that community and it would be preferable not to initiate it in the present context just after the troubles in Bombay and the signing of this agreement with Liaquat Ali. Meanwhile, Morarji can go ahead and ask him for an explanation, etc.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

New Delhi
17 May 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I am writing to you about a subject other than the normal business we deal with.

When I was in Srinagar, a friend came and told me that he wanted some khadi. He went to the local Khadi Bhandar (owned by the AISA), but they refused to sell any to him, unless he produced handspun yarn. As he did not possess it, he could not buy the khadi. Thereupon he asked what their sales of khadi were like. He was told that the sales had stopped completely and

in fact not an inch of khadi had been sold for three months because of this rule about handspun yarn. The shop was doing nothing at all and yet was obviously costing several hundred rupees a month to run it.

This seems to me quite tragic, apart from being totally impractical and uneconomic. If some new rule has to be enforced and this results in complete stoppage of all the sales, then the shop ought to be closed and at least so much money saved. But the real point is, are we bent on killing khadi completely? I do not know who makes these rules and when they are made. But as a Congress member, I am bound to use a certain amount of khadi. Thus far I have personally had no difficulty because many people wish to oblige me. Other people cannot get these facilities. The result is likely to be that Congressmen will simply not be able to obtain khadi for ordinary wear. How then are they to act according to the Congress constitution?

I am putting this question to you, although I know that you are in no way responsible for this state of affairs. But whether you are responsible or not, you and I are affected by it. Perhaps you will be good enough to send this letter of mine to the proper authorities who control the All-India Spinners movement at the present moment.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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Bombay
20 May 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter dated 17 May 1950 on Khadi Bhandar.

I have, of course, nothing to do with the All-India Spinners' Association. Kishorlalbhai came and saw me this morning and I have given him a copy of your letter. It appears that, while the All-India Spinners' Association has made it a condition not to sell any khadi unless handspun yarn is produced, there are some agents of the AISA who are not bound by this and who do supply khadi without handspun yarn. It seems there is no such agency or branch at Srinagar. However, Kishorlalbhai will

look into the matter and let me know, whereupon I shall write to you again.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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Bombay
30 June 1950

My dear Sardar Vallabhbhai,

You might remember mentioning to me when I came up to Dehra Dun on 16 June the case of Navin Chandra Mafatlal¹ with reference to the recovery of income-tax from him. I have had the matter investigated by the Commissioner of Income-tax, Bombay. The substance of his report is as follows:

Mr. Navin Chandra was assessed as a legal representative of the estate of Mr. Mafatlal Gagalbhai who died in 1944. His assessments for 1942-43 and 1943-44 were re-opened under Section 34 of the Income-tax Act and the revised assessments resulted in an additional demand of roughly Rs. 1,28,000. This was appealed against, but the department's assessments were confirmed by the Appellate Tribunal. The demand was payable in the first week of March 1950, but no tax has been paid so far. Strictly speaking, failure to pay tax on the due date would attract a penalty, but no penalty has yet been imposed nor has any coercive step taken to recover the tax due. Mr. Navin Chandra has not approached either the Assistant Commissioner or the Commissioner of Income-tax for permission to pay tax in easy instalments nor for a postponement of the collection of tax. In these circumstances, you will agree that the question of harassment as alleged does not arise at all. If he approaches the Commissioner, reasonable facilities for instalment payment will be granted.

2. Munshi also mentioned the case of Devji Darsi. In this case the total demand outstanding was of the order of roughly Rs. 53,81,000 out of which a sum of Rs. 3,80,000 was adjusted by recovery of the amount due to him on a contract with the military authorities. As the balance outstanding was very large, the properties belonging to the partners were attached, but special instructions were issued by the Board that the Collector should be requested not to put the properties to sale. A further sum

¹ A leading member of the financial house of Mafatlal in Bombay

of Rs. 1,50,000 was paid after this, which brings the net amount outstanding to nearly Rs. 49 lakhs. The assessee made various offers to settle the case by negotiation with the Income-tax Department but nothing substantial has materialised so far. While these negotiations were in progress, the principal partner, Mr. Kalyanji Devji, taking advantage of the fact that the sale of the attached properties had been postponed, obtained a decree from the Bombay High Court, by collusion with his mother, to the effect that the more valuable properties which had been attached had been given in release to his mother as per agreement alleged to have been executed in 1942. We are now taking steps to file a suit in the High Court for setting aside this decree. In the interests of the revenue the Collector has now been requested to proceed with the sale of the properties other than those which are the subject matter of the collusive decree. This is essential as, otherwise, there is a risk of all the property being disposed of before the Government can recover its dues. Any reasonable offer of settlement which the assessee brings forward will, of course, be duly considered by us. I don't think there has been any harassment in this case either.

Yours sincerely,
C. D. Deshmukh

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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Dehra Dun
5 July 1950

My dear Deshmukh,

Thank you for your letter dated 30 June 1950.

About Navin Chandra's case I heard from a reliable source from Bombay. I shall verify it from my informant and let you know about it.

As regards Devji Darsi, I hope you have informed Munshi of these facts. If, as you say, there was danger of the property being lost to Government on account of collusion, you are fully justified in taking adequate precautions. I do not fully know the facts of the case, but my own impression is that Munshi's main point was that, if accommodation had been given to the party for making payments in easy instalments in the beginning, Government would have gained much more.

I think you should give some early thought to the question of 'concealed money'. I myself have been wondering whether

Section 34 of the Income-tax Act is the correct antidote to this evil. It is my candid opinion—and I have never failed to express it—that, if Government had approached the problem with sympathy and imagination two years ago, we would have got ten times what we would in the present circumstances with all the costly paraphernalia of the Income-tax Investigation Commission and the whole machinery of the Income-tax Department. Perhaps, even now, all is not lost and we can salvage something from the wreckage, but if the Commission is allowed to proceed in its lordly and costly way and the Income-tax Department applies the screw, the net result is going to be disappointingly small. What is worse, the fear complex, which has gripped the business community and other investors, is likely to result in money being more shy than ever to the detriment of national interests. By the methods which we have followed and are following, we might not be killing the goose that lays the golden egg, but we are seriously paralysing it, with the result that the sinews of war, as much as the sinews of peace, are shrivelling. It is only a bold and imaginative stroke that can save the situation. If you can evolve a suitable remedy, you can depend on my full support.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri C. D. Deshmukh
Minister for Finance
New Delhi

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Bangalore
3 July 1950

Dear Guruji [Respected Teacher],

I wrote a letter to you about a fortnight back and I hope it has come to your notice amidst the mass of letters. The "proposed" Vallabhbhai Patel Academy of Applied Sciences is having a good response, and when a sufficient amount is subscribed by members of the committee that is being formed by the richest people in Bangalore nearing 25 lakhs, I propose to bring the members of the committee to interview you and formally invite you so that you may give a date. I have proposed also a women's college to perpetuate the memory of your daughter—Maniben Patel College for Women—who has followed your movements like Lakshman following Lord Shri Rama. I expect the matter to be finished by the end of this month. The Patel Academy will be practically a

university by itself like Oxford or Cambridge. I hope by the grace of God, I will be able to show the Guru Dakshina, or my regard and reverence to you by this achievement by [receiving] your blessing. I am tackling all the richest men of Bangalore and Mysore State to come to the forefront for a national cause. The response has not been bad. Consolidation is required.

By the by, when I had seen you at Bombay I had requested you to summon H. H. the Raj Pramukh and request about myself. I shall be very grateful to you for the same.

In Mysore as in other places, students have no place to study. In Bangalore nearly 1,500 students have been denied admission into the Intermediate and B.Sc. There was a demonstration by these 1,500 students saying, "Seats for all for education." The Government colleges are full. The students went to the Secretariat to see the Ministers. Suddenly Reserve Police was called and posted next day also. Some 100 students had come to me hearing of the proposed academy in your name. I pacified them and requested to have patience for a year more till 1951, and meanwhile that I would communicate to you as to the conditions here. Your name gave them great satisfaction as they have come to know I would not fail to write to you.

Hoping this finds you in the best of health,

Yours affectionately,
P. Rangaswami

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Dehra Dun
6 July 1950

Dear Friend,

Thank you for your letter of 3 July 1950.

I do not like the idea of your starting any college or academy either after me or after Maniben. Please drop all your efforts in respect of these proposals.

I am sure you will agree that it would be quite improper on my part to summon the Raj Pramukh for the purpose which you mention.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri P. Rangaswami
Barrister-at-Law
Bangalore

CHAPTER XIV
INDIA AND NEPAL

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New Delhi
9 February 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

I am sending herewith a cutting from the Pakistan Times which contains a despatch which has appeared in the New York Times, presumably from its Paris correspondent. It concerns the relations between India and Nepal. You will notice how an attempt is being made to show that India is doing down Nepal.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

Lahore
7 February 1950

NEW YORK, 5 February.—The New York Times reported from Paris today that the United States, "which has immense prestige in India," was being looked to in the hope that its friendly counsel could end the "prevailing impasse" between India and Nepal.

The writer of the despatch, Mr. C. L. Sulzberger, said: "Events are forcing the United States to take a diplomatic interest throughout Asia on a scale without precedent." He added: "One case in point is that of Nepal."

Mr. Sulzberger said Nepal was "on the verge of becoming a borderland in the ideological contest between Soviet communism and Western democracy."

"Mao Tse-tung's Peking Government has its intention of taking over Tibet. If that manoeuvre is accomplished, Nepal will have to decide whether to recognise the new master of its neighbour. Furthermore, Nepal, home of the famous, brave Gurkhas, will face the tide of communism."

The article, pointing out that Nepal's only link with the outside world was across India, alleged that Nepal's jute exports to the dollar area—"the only source of dollars for the little kingdom"—had been tampered with by India.

The Indians take dollars received for Nepal at Calcutta and pay the Nepalese their rupee equivalent. Furthermore, India has consistently made difficulties in the availability of rolling stock for Nepalese goods, it added.

This had led some Nepalese to suspect that India would like to isolate them economically, with the eventual aspiration of absorbing Nepal into the Indian Republic, it added. Until New Delhi acted more co-operatively these suspicions were likely to remain.

"Negotiations have been going on in New Delhi between Indian and Nepalese representatives for a long time without any conclusive results. As a result Nepal has taken the occasion of her new diplomatic relationships with the United States to complain of this," the New York Times article continued.

"Nepal argues not only that she wants her own small stock of dollars but that she would like to avail herself of possible opportunities under President Truman's Point Four Programme to develop hydro-electric power in her valleys.

"Furthermore, she would like to open herself up to surveys for economic development and possibly private investment," the article said.

"Studies were now being made with a view to possible establishment of an airline, but until regularised transit rights across India were not only guaranteed but carried out this important borderland must remain in isolation.

"For this reason," the paper said, "the United States which has immense prestige in India, is being looked to in the hope that its friendly counsel can end the prevailing impasse."—Reuter.

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New Delhi
9 February 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Your letter of 9 February containing a cutting from the Pakistan Times about India and Nepal. This morning we sent a telegram to our Embassy in Washington on this subject. I enclose a copy of this telegram.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi



DAIYABHAI PATEL CARRIES THE URN CONTAINING THE ASHES OF HIS FATHER WHO DIED IN BOMBAY
ON 15 DECEMBER, 1950, FOR IMMERSION IN TRIVENI, ALLAHABAD. TO HIS LEFT ARE HIS WIFE
AND SISTER, MANIRFN

ENCLOSURE

9 February 1950

From Foreign, New Delhi
To Indemassy, Washington

YOUR TELEGRAM (EN CLAIR) DATED 6 FEBRUARY REGARDING ARTICLE IN NEW YORK TIMES AND NO. 56 OF SAME DATE. IN VIEW OF INFLUENCE OF NEWSPAPER, WE CONSIDER IT NECESSARY THAT OUR RELATIONS WITH NEPAL SHOULD BE CORRECTLY EXPLAINED. WE SUGGEST STATEMENT ON FOLLOWING LINES.

BEGIN IN RECENT DESPATCH PUBLISHED IN THE NEW YORK TIMES, ONE OF ITS CORRESPONDENTS, MR. ELLZBREGER, HAS REFERRED TO "PREVAILING IMPASSE" BETWEEN INDIA AND NEPAL. THIS IMPASSE IS ATTRIBUTED TO INDIA (i) APPROPRIATING DOLLARS RECEIVED FOR NEPAL AT CALCUTTA AND PAYING THE NEPALESE THEIR RUPEE EQUIVALENT, AND (ii) CONSISTENTLY MAKING DIFFICULTIES IN THE AVAILABILITY OF ROLLING STOCK FOR NEPALESE GOODS. THE DESPATCH FURTHER STATES THAT "SOME NEPALESE SUSPECT THAT INDIA WOULD LIKE TO ISOLATE THEM ECONOMICALLY WITH THE EVENTUAL ASPIRATION OF ABSORBING NEPAL INTO THE INDIAN REPUBLIC."

IN THE COURSE OF A SPEECH DELIVERED AS RECENTLY AS 22 JANUARY, HIS HIGHNESS THE MAHARAJA OF NEPAL STATED: "I AM SOON PROCEEDING TO NEW DELHI IN RESPONSE TO AN INVITATION FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA FOR AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS AND ADVICE ON MANY URGENT PROBLEMS. I ACCEPTED THE INVITATION WITH PLEASURE IN THE HOPE THAT MY VISIT WILL LEAD TO AN INCREASE IN THE ANCIENT FRIENDSHIP AND UNDERSTANDING WHICH EXIST BETWEEN US AND OUR GREAT NEIGHBOUR. ON MY RETURN FROM DELHI I HOPE TO BE ABLE TO ANNOUNCE TO YOU THE SUCCESSFUL REALIZATION OF THAT VERY DESIRABLE AIM OF MINE." THE CORDIAL TONE OF THE SPEECH OF THE PRIME MINISTER OF NEPAL PROVIDES SUFFICIENT REFUTATION OF THE STATEMENT THAT ANY IMPASSE EXISTS BETWEEN NEPAL AND INDIA. INDIA HAS NO TERRITORIAL, POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC DESIGNS ON NEPAL. SHE RESPECTS THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THIS ANCIENT KINGDOM AND HER SOLE INTEREST IS THAT NEPAL SHOULD BE STRONG AND PROSPEROUS AND THAT THE TWO COUNTRIES SHOULD, IN COMPLETE FRIENDSHIP AND UNDERSTANDING, CO-OPERATE IN THE MANY COMMON TASKS THAT MUST CONFRONT NEIGHBOURS RELATED TO EACH OTHER SO INTIMATELY, BOTH HISTORICALLY AND GEOGRAPHICALLY AS ARE NEPAL AND INDIA.

THE ARRANGEMENT REGARDING DOLLARS IS A LONGSTANDING ONE BY WHICH INDIA MEETS NEPAL'S ENTIRE REQUIREMENT OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE, IN LIEU OF WHICH FOREIGN EXCHANGE EARNED BY NEPALESE EXPORTS ACCRUE TO INDIA. THE

AMOUNT ACCRUING TO INDIA IS USUALLY LESS THAN THE FOREIGN EXCHANGE RELEASED FOR NEPAL'S IMPORTS. INDIA HAS RECEIVED NO COMPLAINT FROM NEPAL THAT THE LATTER'S REQUIREMENTS OF DOLLARS ARE NOT MET. THE CHARGE THAT ROLLING STOCK IS NOT MADE AVAILABLE FOR NEPALESE GOODS IS ALSO UNFOUNDED. ENDS.

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New Delhi
13 November 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

I am sending herewith a copy of a report which I have received from the Intelligence Bureau. From the report it appears that our territory is being used in connection with the trouble in Nepal and there is even looted property on our land. This raises some important points which, I feel, require discussion in the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Cabinet. Briefly, the points are:

- (a) What steps should be taken to ensure that India is not used for these purposes;
- (b) What our attitude should be to the Nepal Congress and these disturbances;
- (c) What should be done about the property, loot, etc. which the Nepal Congress might have brought into Indian territory ?

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

SOME FACTS ABOUT REBELLION IN NEPAL TARAI BY NEPAL CONGRESS

At 8 p.m. 10 November, leaflets on behalf of the Nepal Congress were dropped from air on Birganj. The aeroplane belonged to Mahabir Shumshere Jang Bahadur Rana, proprietor of Himalayan Airways, and the plane operated from Patna aerodrome.

2. The spearhead of the attack on Birganj was led by 200 armed men of the Nepal Congress, who had come from Calcutta and had collected at Muzaffarpur. Some of them were in uniform, but others were in plain clothes, and they generally carried sten-guns. From Muzaffarpur this force moved to Raxaul by trucks. All the arms and ammunition were also believed to have been brought from Calcutta.

3. The Bara Hakim of Birganj, after arrest, was brought to Raxaul and kept as a captive in the Raxaul dak bungalow situated in front of the police station. The Nepal Congress had placed armed sentries on the bungalow to stop him from running away. He has since been removed from Raxaul to Muzaffarpur by the Bihar authorities.
4. 46 captured Nepali troops were kept in custody in the Raxaul police station for over 24 hours and they were being persuaded to join the Nepal Congress forces, but they persistently refused to do so. They have been removed from the police station now.
5. It is believed that the Nepal Congress has removed Rs. 26,00,000 in cash. Three boxes of gold bullion and two boxes of sovereigns from the Birganj Treasury. Subarna Shamsher, B. P. Koirala and Tej Bahadur are holding their offices in the Nepal Government's Rest House in Raxaul in Indian territory. It is believed that the money has been brought to this office.
6. There is much panic in Birganj and apprehending counterattack by Government forces people are fleeing in panic. The Nepal Congress has banned the removal of any property by their owners. Marwaris trading in Birganj have moved to Raxaul.
7. 200 of the Nepal Congress forces have gone north towards Amlekhganj, where it is believed that there are 1,200 more sympathisers who are waiting in hiding. It is expected that there will be a showdown somewhere between Amlekhganj and Bhimphera between the Nepal Government forces coming down from Kathmandu and the Nepal Congress forces advancing from the Birganj side.
8. There is general impression in Raxaul and in the neighbourhood that these attacks had the backing of the Government of India and Raxaul newspapers have also given out the same impression.

B. N. Mallik

Director, Intelligence Bureau
Ministry of Home Affairs
Government of India

13 November 1950

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New Delhi
15 November 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

We have been hearing Press reports about the distribution of leaflets by air in Nepal. There was a protest from the Nepalese Government also about it. I am rather disturbed about this because there is no evidence which could be more convincingly put

forward for India being used as a base of operation by the Nepal Congress than the use of aircraft for this operation. The inference is clear and obvious that the aircraft must have flown from Indian territory. Probably, such use of the aircraft would also be contrary to our Aircraft Act and Rules. The point might be examined and, if necessary, suitable action might be taken for the breach of these Rules. In the meantime, it seems to me essential that we stop this unauthorised use of aircraft and our aerodromes and I would suggest immediate action on this line because the longer this continues the more difficult it will be for us to avoid the charge that operations of the Nepal Congress are centred in India.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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New Delhi
16 November 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Your letter of 15 November about an aircraft flying over Nepal. We have already issued instructions that no aircraft, other than the regular service ones, should visit Nepal or fly over Nepal territory without our permission.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

NOTE ON POLITICAL CONDITIONS IN NEPAL PREPARED BY THE PRIME MINISTER

The situation in Nepal is still confusing and it is difficult to prophesy. We are likely to have to face rather difficult problems in the near future. General Bijay is said to be coming here in a day or two for conversations with us. We ought to be fairly clear in our minds what line we should adopt. That line should not involve any final commitment at this stage.

It seems to me clear that the mass of the population is likely to side with the King [Tribhuban] and the Nepal Congress. Newspapers report that Nepali students from Banaras are going to Nepal to join the fight on behalf of the Congress. In Kathmandu also popular feeling is in favour of the King.

But the real crux of the matter lies in the attitude of the Nepal Army. If a considerable portion of this army joins the Nepal Congress or the insurgents, then the Rana regime collapses completely. If, however, most of the army stands by the Prime Minister's Party, then the struggle will continue. There will be patches of Nepal territory held by the insurgents. It will be difficult for the army to spread out all over Nepal. Undoubtedly that would be a blow to the Nepal Congress and would mean a prolonged struggle. Probably they have no considerable resources to carry this on.

The contemplated counter-attack on Birganj tonight has some significance. There are supposed to be 2,000 soldiers marching against Birganj. If these stand firm for the Rana, then they ought to have no great difficulty in capturing Birganj. That would be a blow to the Nepal Congress, though that will certainly not end the struggle as there are many other areas where the writ of the Nepal Government has ceased to run. If, on the other hand, there is disaffection even in these Nepalese troops and some of them go over to the other side or do not fight properly, that would be a great blow to the Kathmandu Government.

I have told the Chief Minister of Bihar that the Nepalese Government troops should not be allowed to enter our territory in pursuit or otherwise.

Events are developing so rapidly that within a few days we might get some indication of the strength of the two parties. In any event the Rana's regime has been badly shaken. It can win by military means and terroristic tactics. Even so, it seems rather doubtful that it will be in a position to function as a stable Government and continuous trouble will be occurring in various outlying parts of Nepal.

It is clear that we cannot support any going back to the old regime, as it was. Although we have taken no final decision, to some extent we are being progressively committed to the King. The reception we have given him here is itself some commitment. We cannot therefore easily go back upon it without continued trouble for ourselves. Public opinion in India will resent our going back upon it very much because there can be no doubt that that public opinion is in favour of the Nepal Congress. No decision of this point is necessary at this stage, but some line will have to be adopted in our talks with General Bijay or others.

Generally speaking, it seems to me that our line should be that the King should continue as such and that we do not recognise the hurried crowning of his baby grandson. Further, that far-reaching political reforms are essential and inevitable now. What the nature of these should be, is a matter for careful consideration, and when the time comes we shall have to bring in the Nepal Congress into the picture. They are the only organised body that can attempt to shoulder the burden and control the situation.

What will be the position of the Rana family then? I do not think it is possible, in those circumstances, for the present Prime Minister to continue in his office. It may, however, be possible to some other member of the Rana family to be Prime Minister, but obviously with greatly restricted powers. The present so-called Constitution of Nepal or Convention will have to go. Regarding the future Constitution, some kind of a Constituent Assembly might be necessary and appears desirable. But meanwhile, there will have to be interim arrangements and an Interim Government, which might be chosen from some members of the Rana family and some Nepal Congress people. Naturally, the former should be such as have good relations with the latter.

These are some odd ideas for us to develop in our minds and to serve as some kind of rough indication for our talks. In the event of the Nepal Congress being more or less crushed and the Rana regime controlling the situation fully, the position will be more difficult. On the one hand, the Rana Government in Nepal will become more obstinate and difficult to deal with, on the other, we can hardly throw overboard the King and accept things as they were in Nepal. We have, therefore, to throw our full moral weight on the side of a radical change and far-reaching reforms and make it clear that nothing short of this can satisfy us. We do not wish to impose anything on Nepal, but we can, without impropriety, insist on a Constituent Assembly properly elected.

12 November 1950

Jawaharlal Nehru

NOTE PREPARED BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER ON TALKS WITH
THE NEPALESE AMBASSADOR IN NEW DELHI

I met the Nepalese Ambassador, General Kaiser, and General Bijay at their request this afternoon. They told me that they had referred the whole matter to their Prime Minister, who had told them that it required consideration by the Cabinet and he would be informing them of their reactions by Sunday or Monday. In the meantime, they wanted my advice. I told them that they had to come to important decisions in the light of the delicate international situation prevailing in the world today. The situation was such that neither they nor we could afford to have instability and insecurity in Nepal. There was no doubt that in Nepal's difficulties it was India and no other power which could assist it. Britain's role in Asia or South-east Asia was no longer decisive. It had lost its former importance in world affairs; but the deterioration in its position in Asia was even more marked. None of us desired to encroach on Nepal's independence; indeed, it was everybody's concern here to preserve it. It was, therefore, in our mutual interests to see that the present difficulties were settled to our mutual satisfaction and advantage.

I added that whatever they decide they must do so in full realisation of their difficulties and ours. None of us was in any way interested in lowering their prestige. In fact, we were all concerned to maintain their prestige without loss of honour. But this could come about only through goodwill, statesmanship and tolerance. There was no point in suggesting or achieving a solution which would leave a trail of bitterness behind. That would be no lasting solution. I told them that my own experience with the Princes had convinced me that when the question came of parting with power—they all agreed that such a situation had arisen in Nepal—there was every advantage in being liberal rather than niggardly and in doing things with a good grace. I told them that if we felt in them a desire to act in accord with these principles we could help them to extricate themselves from a difficult situation, but of course we could do nothing if the insistence was on false prestige and irrevocable commitments.

I told them that, in so far as reforms were concerned, we realised the *circumstances and conditions of Nepal* and it would not be difficult to come to a satisfactory lasting solution, but the position of the King seemed a stumbling-block and unless they could stoop from their unbending attitude we could not explore a way out. I told them frankly that, if we could have some indication that they were prepared to think in terms of revocation of the step they had taken in proclaiming the Boy King I saw no chance of our viewpoints coming together and a solution being reached which would save their prestige and maintain our own position in the eyes of the peoples of India and Nepal, and indeed the world.

This was in brief what I told them. It was by no means a monologue. The distinguished visitors now and then referred to the difficulties, but throughout adopted an attitude of comprehension. They particularly responded to 'A' [the position of the King] above and agreed that that was the crux of the problem. I felt that they went away with the impression that they had to do something on those lines to extricate themselves, and as far as I was able to judge they were anxious that we should help them out. They promised to see me again after they got the reactions of their Prime Minister.

Vallabhbhai Patel

1 December 1950

New Delhi
25 November 1950

My dear Sardar Vallabhbhai,

I send herewith a copy of B. K. Nehru's¹ letter of 14 November and of my reply, for your information.

Yours sincerely,
C. D. Deshmukh

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE I

Washington 25 DC
14 November 1950

My dear Deshmukh,

You will remember that I spoke to you in Paris about [Eugene] Black's visiting India and you said you would welcome the visit and would send him a letter of invitation. I enquired from him some time ago what his plans were, and he said he would very much like to go to India after he had come back from Brazil, say, some time in January or February, but that he would let me know definitely later. I asked him today again after the Board meeting and he said that he wanted me to believe that he was completely sold on India and wanted to do everything in his power to help India, because he had been of the view ever since he had visited Indonesia that our part of the world was undoubtedly the most important in the battle against communism and that India, as the leading country in that part of the world, should be helped substantially—a view which he had not, unfortunately, been able to get accepted at that time in the State Department. If he visited India he would also have to visit Pakistan, and while the two countries were still quarrelling and nothing was happening about the trade and exchange dispute, he felt his visit might be misconstrued as implying that the [World] Bank was unconcerned about this dispute and

¹ ICS; Commissioner General of Economic Affairs, in Washington, 1958; Ambassador to USA, 1961-63; Governor of Assam and Nagaland, 1968-73; India's High Commissioner in UK

was willing to help either or both of these countries even while the dispute continued and affected the capacity of the countries to repay their loans. This being so, he was hesitant whether to go or not. I said that all that I had in view—and all that I thought you had in view—was that he should come to India purely with a view to seeing for himself what we were doing and how we were doing it; what our needs were and what was necessary to satisfy them; and that I had no thought of taking him to India and making him promise us a big loan. He said that if it was clearly understood that his would be a fact-finding mission alone, and if it was also understood that the Bank would not make any substantial loans till the dispute with Pakistan was settled, he would like to come. But he feared that even if this was understood between him and the Government, it might be difficult for a country with a free Press to prevent other notions getting into the public mind. He said that he was not, of course, concerned with the merits of the dispute but only with its economic consequences which reduced the capacity of India to service external debt. I said that I thought personally that his attitude would not be misunderstood, except that I did not think that his concern was with the settlement of the dispute but only with the mitigation of the economic consequences thereof, which mitigation might come about, for example, by India growing for herself all the jute she needed, but that I would, in the circumstances, write to you and ask you for your reactions and whether you would, in view of the continuation of the Indo-Pakistan dispute, still wish him to come. He said that was an excellent idea and more or less implied he would abide by your advice.

2. I accordingly write to you to ask whether you think it will be a good thing for Black to come. Personally, I think it will, because I at least never had any notion of the Government of India talking loans to him while he was there and his unwillingness to talk loans makes no difference. Besides, with the publication of the Gordon Gray Report and the kind of atmosphere that is now prevailing in the State Department and of which I made some mention to you in Paris, if there is to be any follow-up of the Gray proposals, Black, after he has seen what we are doing (on the assumption, of course, that we are doing something!), might be a very powerful influence in Washington in our favour.

Yours sincerely,
B. K. Nehru

ENCLOSURE II

New Delhi
25 November 1950

My dear Nehru,

Thank you for your letter of 14 November regarding a visit to India some time next January or February by Black, President of the International Bank.

I find it difficult to reply definitely at this stage for various reasons.

Firstly, we are in the preliminary stage of planning our budget for next year and are, in the course of it, considering (1) what economies in revenue expenditure can be effected, (2) to what extent the capital expenditure can be cut down so as to be less disproportionate to our resources, and (3) how resources themselves could be augmented. Unless I am myself satisfied that Government have taken the right decision in these matters, I should not like to invite Black. I expect the Cabinet's preliminary reactions within the next fortnight.

Secondly, the Colombo Plan is going to be published on 28 November, and it seems to me that it would be better to await India's initial reactions to it before trying to interest Black as an ally.

Thirdly, if Black does visit us, I should like him to come to talk loans in an exploratory way and as part of external financing of the Colombo Plan. I cannot see much advantage in just a give-us-the-once-over visit. This means, in view of Black's reading of the situation, that the Pakistan rupee dispute should be nearer solution. We are trying to induce the [International Monetary] Fund to expedite their consideration of the matter, and I expect to know more definitely about their intentions within a couple of weeks.

I shall write to you again on this subject towards the middle of December.

Yours sincerely,
C. D. Deshmukh

B. K. Nehru, Esq.
International Bank for Reconstruction
and Development
Washington 25 DC
USA

New Delhi
26 November 1950

My dear Deshmukh,

Thank you for your letter dated 25 November 1950.

I entirely agree with you in the reply that you sent to Nehru about Black's visit to India. There is, however, one thing which has struck me and I thought I would share it with you. If Black makes it a definite condition that the Bank would not make any substantial loans till the dispute with Pakistan was settled, why should we not make that an argument for settling the exchange question as soon as possible? They cannot make this condition and, at the same time, keep on postponing the settlement of the issue not by weeks but by months. After all, they must realise that by this action of theirs it is India which suffers and not so much Pakistan. I think we are entitled to make this argument.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri C. D. Deshmukh
Minister for Finance
New Delhi

New Delhi
29 November 1950

My dear Sardar Vallabhbhai,

Thank you for your letter of 26 November. The delay in considering the par value for Pakistan is on the part of the International Monetary Fund, not the Bank of which Black is President. We could certainly use the argument with the Fund, but this will then be only a specific case of the general proposition that a settlement will be of economic benefit to India, as well as to Pakistan—who, incidentally, have applied for a loan.

Whether it is the Fund or the Bank, it is really the USA, who, with their preponderance of votes, can influence the course

have to make our decision and we would have to make it quickly because otherwise we would lose him. We would not find the like of him very easily and I do hope that you will give this matter your personal attention. If you do take an interest then we shall be flying our own planes within five years and they would be very good planes too. We would then have taken another step towards achieving real greatness. I have secured his services with great difficulty. I need not emphasise his value to us. I would not have troubled you, but for the feeling that men with small vision and petty ideas and a wrong political outlook might spoil it. There is another danger also which is much more important and that is that the other great powers do not and would not desire that we should build up this industry because they know that once we have this industry we would be a power to be reckoned with. They will put many obstacles in the way. I have not yet seen the report, so I cannot opine on its merits. He has, however, mentioned to me that we would be building all our planes within five years and we would be saving a lot of money. I am only writing this to warn you of the dangers arising out of the intrigues of the other powers.

If all these industries are built up we would succeed in making India really strong and a power of consequence. I have no doubt that this can be done provided one has imagination and enthusiasm.

ENCLOSURE II

Munchen-Solln
Frohlichstrasse 2
Berne
23 June 1950

To the Government of India
H.E. Mr. Desai
Berne

In reply to the letter dated 24 February 1950 from the Government of India, and as a result of my study trip to India, which I was able to carry out at the beginning of this year, I beg to submit herewith, in ten copies, the detailed plans for the setting up of an independent Indian aircraft industry.

In order to commence and carry out this great project in the best way possible, it will be necessary first of all to carry out careful and thorough preliminary work in Europe. It will further be necessary to have a liaison office in Switzerland in order to maintain contacts with the important scientific institutes and to secure machinery and additional supplies of material, and it will finally be necessary to build up the small trial machines in Switzerland, in order to avoid, from the start, excessive costs.

I must point out that the costs for the setting up of the industry have been calculated with great care, in order that later no undesirable transgressions need be made as far as possible.

Only if first class specialists are put on all the specialised sections of this great and technically complicated work, will there be a guarantee that, as far as human mind can conjecture, there will be no retrogression. In order not to endanger the whole programme, the commencement of the development of the motor industry will be executed the quickest possible in Switzerland, because the setting up of the motor works in India would require a long time, and parallel to that, the preliminary work, especially in the case of the industry for accessories, must be carried out.

I request that the Government of India scrutinise the above-mentioned plans and send their reply to me at the legation in Berne.

Should the Government of India decide to set up a national Indian aircraft industry in accordance with my plans then I am at their disposal for concluding the contract at the commencement of the work.

I avail myself of this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to H.E. Mr. Desai for having made the quick execution of my work in Berne easier and so agreeable in every way.

With assurances of my high consideration,

Yours respectfully,
Willy Messerschmitt

(Original in German)

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New Delhi
9 July 1950

Revered Sardarji,

Please refer to your letter dated 7 July 1950.

Dhirubhai sent a copy of his letter to you to me also. He has kindly sent a report to me also. This is now being examined and we shall come up with our proposal to the Cabinet as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,
Harekrushna Mahtab

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
Dehra Dun.

great difficulties at times and "unusual advances to be subsequently recovered" have to be given. He said to my officers that the practice of keeping more than one cash book was not unknown in business but later on agreed to stop at this! The Madras accountant (one Parthasarathi), who was here in the past, was obviously bullied and hectorred and made to keep the sums out of account. Luckily, he kept some subsidiary (produced after great difficulty) accounts secretly to protect himself which have helped somewhat to fix the responsibility. Seeing that it is no use to make a cat's-paw of the accountant, who out of disgust got a transfer to Lisbon, the Minister orally accepted responsibility for the practice. He pleads ignorance of Government rules. But he obviously rode roughshod over his accountant. It has been found impossible after six hours' work even to reconcile the opening and closing balances of two months in 1948! The Minister says that there has been no fraud, but only a detailed audit, which will take time, will show! We have no time for extensive audit and I propose to order my Audit Officer in London to send an official for extensive local audit. As you realise, even if the accounts are right, there could be grave malpractices which are beyond audit to discover. I think you shall have to scrutinise proposals from here for any large-scale schemes with extra care. I understand the Minister will be seeing you shortly for some large schemes on patriotic grounds.

It is absolutely essential to send to this Legation a strong high-powered official to look after the administration. The officers next to the Minister are non-officials of his own choice. I feel very unhappy that at the very outset some of our foreign missions should be going so wrong.

I hope you are fit and well.

PS.

Please drop me a line to India to say that you have got this list. Mr. Devadas Gandhi [Mahatma Gandhi's youngest son, Managing Editor of the Hindustan Times] has had an "unofficial advance" of 1,200 francs kept out of account but given out of Government cash.

New Delhi
31 January 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

I am sending herewith a copy of the letter which I have received from Dhiru [Dhirubhai Desai] about Subhas Bose's child and her mother. I myself do not see how we can resist a request for passport if it is made. After all, as validly married wife and

legitimate child of an Indian citizen, they are entitled to it. I should be grateful for your advice.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

Legation of India
Berne
25 January 1950

Pujya Bapu,

I am writing this to you in relation to a very delicate matter. You know that we are opening a legation in Vienna. You also know that Subhas Babu's child and her mother are living there. I have heard that she intends applying for an Indian passport. We can only grant a passport if we recognise the marriage. The recognition of the validity of the marriage necessarily does involve the recognition of the legitimacy of the child. Of course, this does not give her any right to property. The refusal to grant a passport is also a very serious matter. I shall be deeply grateful to you if you let me have your considered views as to what I should do.

I do hope you are keeping well.

Please send us your blessings.

With love,

Yours affectionately,
Dhiru [Desai]

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

New Delhi
6 February 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I am sorry for the delay in answering your letter of 31 January about the granting of a passport to Subhas Bose's wife. Your letter unfortunately got mixed up with some papers.

New Delhi
2 December 1950

My dear Mahtab,

I understand that recently an expert of De Havilland visited the Hindustan Aircraft Limited to investigate the position of Vampire production in relation to the production programme that we had approved some time ago. I have seen a brief summary of the report which he presented and which, to say the least, is most disquieting. As you know, we are in none too favourable a position vis-a-vis the threat from our neighbours. There can be no doubt that we must have complete air superiority and it was from that point of view that we had approved of the Vampire programme even in conditions of acute financial stringency. I feel, therefore, very uneasy to find that our programme has, in consequence of the comparatively poor progress made, to be put off by more than a year. From the report it appears that there has been a lack of appreciation of the volume of work involved in putting in an aircraft such as the Vampire into production, that the planning was on a very optimistic basis, that this planning has not been implemented by the departments concerned, that the Planning Department have not ordered against the planned programme and, therefore, the shop load has not been made apparent to those personnel whose responsibility it is to achieve programme requirements. This, to say the least, is a very sorry state of affairs and seems to indicate that there was something radically wrong with the handling of the whole business. I cannot help feeling that neither the importance nor the urgency of the whole programme seems to have been properly realised in a matter vitally affecting India's security. This omission and failure are almost culpable. I think the least that you can do is to look into this question and see that those who have failed to deliver the goods are adequately dealt with. We cannot be lenient or complacent in matters of this kind.

You will recall that in June last when you came to Dehra Dun and I discussed this matter, you said that you were agreeable to transfer this company to the Defence Ministry so that they could look after it as they were looking after the ordnance

factories. I was fully convinced then that that was the only way of making the best use of Hindustan Aircraft. This instance makes me even more convinced on that point. I would, therefore, like you to re-examine the position from this point of view and come to an early decision about it. We cannot afford to lose any more time in putting this factory to maximum use.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri Harekrushna Mahitah
Minister for Industry & Supply
New Delhi

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New Delhi
26 October 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I received the other day [V.] Narhari Rao's [Comptroller and Auditor-General] report on his inspection of our Legation at Berne in Switzerland. This report is a fairly strongly-worded document criticising many things in the Legation. To give you some idea of the Auditor-General's reactions to the state of the accounts in our Legation at Berne I am sending you a copy of a letter which Narhari Rao wrote to [C.D.] Deshmukh [Finance Minister].

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

ENCLOSURE

4 September 1950

We arrived here on the afternoon of the 1st and G. S. Rau, my Director of Audit, and my Secretary, Srinivasan, have been looking into the accounts here. The cash book is reported to be in a state of complete chaos and the unofficial reports we had previously received about the [mooney] being irregularly taken out and given as "advances" to various officials and non-officials without being accounted for have been confirmed. The accounts sent to India are evidently incorrect and do not tally with facts. The Minister [Dhirubhai Desai] himself, after a great deal of roundabout talk, admitted that he was responsible and promised to do everything correctly in future. The explanations for the "advances" is that officials and visitors are in

I am quite clear that a passport should be granted. The only question that arises is whether the marriage was a valid one or not. It is for our Minister to satisfy himself about the validity of the marriage and issue a passport. A Minister's recognition of the validity of the marriage does not necessarily mean a final decision which cannot be challenged later in a court of law. A Minister can only proceed on prima facie evidence and act accordingly. So far as I know, there is adequate proof about the marriage. Anyhow I suggest that Dhuru Desai might be informed that if he or our passport issuing authority is satisfied by prima facie evidence about the validity of the marriage, he could issue the passport. If there is any doubt about this, he might refer the matter to us again.

Yours,
Jawaharlal Nehru

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

301

New Delhi
7 February 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter of 6 February 1950 about the grant of a passport to Subhas Bose's wife.

2. I agree with you in the suggestion that you have made and I am informing Dhuru accordingly.

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

302

New Delhi
7 February 1950

My Dear Dhuru,

You wrote to me about the grant of a passport to Subhas Bose's widow. If she asks for a passport and the passport issuing authority is satisfied by prima facie evidence about the validity of the marriage, there can be no question of our refusing the

passport: However, if there is any doubt about the question of marriage, you might refer the matter to us again. I have consulted Jawaharlal and he agrees in this suggestion.

Hope both of you are doing well.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Shri Dhirubhai Desai
Indian Embassy
Switzerland
Berne

303

Legation of India
Berne
18 February 1950

Pujya Bapu,

I am grateful to you for your letter dated 7 February 1950. Subhas Babu's widow has not approached me, but has mentioned to our Vice-Consul in Vienna, who is under my jurisdiction, about her intention to apply for a passport for her daughter.

The marriage that was supposed to have taken place was not a civil marriage, but was supposed to have been according to Hindu rights. She has a letter from Subbas Babu acknowledging that they had gone through a Hindu marriage ceremony. I do not know if any witnesses would be forthcoming. As and when the application is received, I shall investigate the matter and after a complete investigation I will write to you and then ask you for directions.

With pranams,

Yours affectionately,
Dhiru

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabbbbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

Dehra Dun
28 June 1950

My dear Amiya,

I am sending herewith, strictly for your information, a copy of a letter which I have received from our Ambassador in Berne, Dhirubhai Desai, regarding Subhas Babu's daughter. I know Sarat Babu took kindly to her and wanted to do something for her. I do not know what his intentions were. If you could let me know, it would be helpful in order to decide what to do about her. I should also like to have your own suggestions. It seems to me that, if the marriage is accepted, both of them are Indian nationals and it might be desirable to bring them to India and make some provision for them. Please write to me without reserve and see that strict secrecy is observed about this letter as well as the enclosure.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri Amiya Bose,
1, Woodburn park
Calcutta

ENCLOSURE

Legation of India
Berne
16 June 1950

Pujya Bapu,

Some time ago you had asked me to make enquiries about Subhas Babu's daughter and how she was getting on and the conditions in which her mother and she were living. I had made the enquiries then and passed the information on to you.

When I went to Vienna this time, I saw them. They are living in a very small place, and the mother is working in the telephone exchange. She is drawing a small salary and she makes two ends meet with great difficulty.

She is a self-respecting person and she has therefore no desire to beg for any favours.

When Sarat Babu was last here, he had seen them and he was hoping to make some provision for them. He liked them both and he was very happy to meet them. However, he died suddenly and it appears that he has made no provision whatever. I have spoken to the mother and she did not ask for any assistance. I however feel that they are earning a very precarious living and some provision should be made. Madhuri bought some clothes for the child and we also helped them in many small ways. The mother is worried about one other thing. She has no relations and she is completely alone, and in case anything were to happen to her, the child would be completely alone in the world. I do not know what to do. I have told her not to worry. I fully appreciate her position. I should like you to give the matter some thought and let me have your reaction. It would be sad indeed if Suhhas Babu's child were to be found stranded. None of his erstwhile friends are extending any help whatever and the only people rendering any assistance are Soli and myself. Our Attache in Vienna also looks after them and helps them in small ways.

The child is a very nice child and has been well brought up and is well behaved. You may be certain that I shall keep an eye of them.

With pranams,

Yours affectionately,
Dhiru

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

305

1, Woodburn park
Calcutta
6 July 1950

My dear Sardarji,

Many thanks for your kind letter of 23 June.

I intend going to Europe this year to meet the person concerned, so that we may be in a position to decide our future course of action.

My court closes on 8 September. I hope it will be possible for me to fly to Europe some time in the middle of September.

I hope you are keeping well.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Amiyanath Bose

The Hon'ble Sardar Patel

306

New Delhi
11 August 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

You will remember that about two years ago I wrote to you about Subhas Bose's wife and daughter who are in Vienna. I had suggested then that some money might be sent to her. I have an idea that you did send some money, probably Rs. 1,000 through Nathalal. I have recently had some fresh correspondence on this subject with Dhiru Desai, and in consultation with him we have fixed that we should give a monthly allowance to the lady. This amounts to Rs. 285/11/- a month. We are making arrangements to deposit six months' allowance, that is Rs. 1,715 with our Consul in Vienna, who can pay the sum monthly to the lady.

I do not know how your INA funds stand and if you have any money left with you on that account. If you have any money left, perhaps you could pay this sum for six months or a year. If so, could you kindly send me a cheque?

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

307

New Delhi
12 August 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter of 11 August 1950 regarding Subhas's wife and daughter.

I had myself written to Dhiru that I would get in touch with his relations here and see what they have to say. Accordingly, I wrote to Amiya Bose communicating to him a copy of Dhiru's letter and asking him to let me know whether, in view of what

was reported and of Sarat Babu's interest in the matter, the family wanted to do anything about it. Amiya has written to me that he will go to Europe in September and will get in touch with the lady to evolve a suitable arrangement. I hope, as a result of his visit, it will be possible to do something from the family funds; if not, we shall have to do something from the INA funds. For the time being, therefore, provision might be made, say for six months. After Amiya's return, we can think of some permanent arrangement.

I am sending herewith a cheque for Rs.1,715 to cover the interim maintenance allowance.

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

308

New Delhi
12 August 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thank you for your letter of the 12th about Subhas Bose's wife and daughter. Thank you also for the cheque for Rs.1,715. I am having this sent to our Consul in Vienna. The money, however, will be spent according to the directions of Dhiru Desai.

Yours affectionately,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

CHAPTER XV
CANAL WATER DISPUTE

309

Barnes Court
Simla
4 September 1950

My dear Sardar Patel,

I am very glad to know from Sachdev, our Chief Secretary, who telephoned to me last night from Delhi, that you were present at the conference convened by the Prime Minister yesterday to discuss the canal water dispute. I understand that certain conclusions were reached and a draft reply is being prepared. The reply is to be considered at a meeting to be held at Delhi either on the 10th or 11th, and Sachdev conveyed to me the Prime Minister's message that he wishes me specially to be at Delhi at the meeting to consider the draft reply. Very likely, the meeting will be held on the 10th, and on this assumption I will be at Delhi on the 10th. If Dr. Gopichand feels well enough he would also come, but I do not wish him to take any risks with his health.

2. In this connection, I enclose for your information a copy of a letter which I wrote to Pandit Nehru on 2 September. This was followed by a telephone message to him requesting that any conclusions which may be reached at the meeting on 3 September should be sent to us for information and comments. I made this request because, owing to circumstances beyond my control, ministerial advice had not been available to me. It is, presumably, in response to this request that Pandit Nehru has asked me specially to come to Delhi.

3. I will make it a point of seeing you at Delhi on the 10th, if you are not otherwise engaged.

Yours sincerely,
C. M. Trivedi

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

Barnes Court
Simla
2 September 1950

My dear Pandit Nehru,

I am grateful to you for your letter dated 28 August, regarding the canal water dispute. I have also seen the Pakistan Government's note dated 23 August, on the same subject. We are sending our Chief Secretary and our Chief Engineer (Bhakra Dam) to represent us at the meeting you are holding tomorrow to consider what reply should be given to Liaquat Ali Khan. It has not been possible for any Honourable Minister to represent us, because Dr. Gopinand is ill, and no other Honourable Minister is very much conversant with the question.

2. If, you say, we shall have to agree to some form of arbitration over the canal water dispute, I think that our agreement to arbitration should be contingent on the following conditions:

(a) The terms of reference for arbitration must be previously determined and agreed to by both parties. We know from experience what a great deal of trouble and embarrassment arise either from no terms of reference or vague terms of reference. I myself feel that it will be very difficult for arbitration to proceed until there are technical data, and one of the terms of reference will probably have to be the appointment of a joint technical commission. I do not think the matter is as simple as is sought to be made out in the note of the Pakistan Government.

(b) The Pakistan Government should, at the same time, agree to the reference of the evacuee property dispute to arbitration. Here also the terms of reference must be defined by agreement. You will remember that when I had a talk with you about the canal water dispute in March last, I had pressed the view—and you had more or less agreed—that should it be considered desirable or necessary to refer the canal water dispute to arbitration, we must at the same time secure that the evacuee property dispute is referred to arbitration. I should add that the question of arbitration over this issue will not, of course, arise if the dispute is settled otherwise as a result of the correspondence which Gopalaswami Ayyangar is carrying on with Pakistan, to which you have referred in your letter.

3. So much for conditions prior to or accompanying arbitration. These I have suggested on the assumption that we must agree to arbitration immediately.

Camp Bombay
7 September 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

I had a letter from Trivedi about the canal water dispute. It appears that you have called him on the 10th for consideration of the draft. I would be grateful if the draft could be shown to me before it issues. As you know, I have a point of view and I should very much like to be in a position to comment on the draft before it finally issues. I hope you will not mind the delay of a day or two which would be involved on this account.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister
New Delhi

New Delhi
9 September 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

On my return from Assam I have had a number of letters from you, five I think. I am sorry for the slight delay in answering them, but I have been rather overwhelmed not only with work but also with Cabinet meetings and committee meetings.

About the canal Water dispute, we have had several meetings in committee and discussed it at length. Setalvad came back this morning and we had another conference with him. Trivedi comes tomorrow and there will be a full conference on the 11th morning when we hope to finalise the draft. I cannot send you the draft yet because it is not ready. What has been prepared is very sketchy. Perhaps by tomorrow evening we might have the draft ready. I shall certainly send it to you as soon as it is ready. The delay of a day or two does not matter, but the answer has to go to Pakistan before some of us leave for the Nasik Congress.

Our present decisions are more or less as follows: We do not propose to deal argumentatively with many of the points that have been raised in the Pakistan letter. That is to say, we do not deal with the merits of the case. We shall, of course, deal with certain important aspects such as the agreement of 4 May 1948 and their assertion that it was under coercion. We shall also deal with our repeated attempts to have a technical survey which we consider quite essential in any event, whatever further steps might be taken.

There is not much dispute about this thus far. Of course, when the draft is prepared, it will have to be carefully considered. The argument has revolved round two points: One, whether we should in the final analysis agree to the Hague Court or arbitration tribunal, and, secondly, which of these two is preferable.

You will remember my suggestion that we might adopt the USA-Canada example about a joint commission for certain border and water disputes. On further consideration this was found not to be feasible. Of course, in any event, such a joint commission could not deal with the evacuee property dispute.

After lengthy argument we came to the conclusion that there was no escape from our agreeing to some tribunal, either the Hague Court or arbitration. In any event, this was to be linked up with the canal water dispute.

Regarding the second point, we finally decided to suggest a judicial commission consisting of two Indian judges and two Pakistani judges. There was to be no foreigner. Of course, it can be said that they may not agree, and what then? We say nothing about it at this stage. If Pakistan raises the point, we propose to say that we can consider the matter then and refer such points as are still in dispute to some other tribunal, whatever that might be. This Indo-Pakistan Arbitration Commission would have full powers and, in any event, can clear the ground very much. If anything has to be referred after that, they will be limited issues. But this can be considered later. Even this Commission would inevitably have to appoint a fact-finding commission of experts.

This very Arbitration Tribunal can take up the evacuee property problem to which we shall attach great importance. We shall lay stress on the urgency of that matter and the importance of that being taken up immediately.

Gopalaswami has received a reply from Liaquat Ali Khan about evacuee property. This reply is a brief one saying that his Finance Minister is not here and he must await his return. Gopalaswami

continue (a) to abide by the terms of the Agreement of 4 May 1948 and (b) to supply water to Pakistan until final agreement was reached. In spite of the notice that the Government of Pakistan have now given of their intention to terminate the Agreement of 4 May 1948 the Government of India adhere to their intention to continue the supply of water to the canals referred to, until the dispute is settled. They are, therefore, unable to understand why any threat to international peace and security should be apprehended from any attitude or action of theirs.

4. As regards (2), the Government of India wish to recall that the Agreement of 4 May 1948 was reached between the Prime Minister of India and the Finance Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Ghulam Mohammad, at a conference that was marked by cordiality and goodwill. When the joint communique announcing this Agreement was issued by the two Governments on 7 May 1948 there was no suggestion of compulsion, nor was any such suggestion made in the note that was submitted three weeks later by the West Punjab Government to the Punjab Partition Committee. When the Inter-Dominion Conference, at which Pakistan was represented by the Hon'ble Sir Mohammad Zafrullah Khan, met at Lahore on 21 July 1948, no complaint of compulsion was made. Thirteen months later, in June 1949, when, for the first time, the Government of Pakistan stated that the "present modus vivendi is onerous and unsatisfactory to Pakistan, and that a final solution should no longer be postponed" there was no allusion to compulsion having influenced the Government of Pakistan in accepting the Agreement of 4 May 1948. The Government of Pakistan will appreciate that, against this background of the sequence of events and their declared intention not to interfere with the supply of water to the Pakistan canals in reference, the Government of India are unable to accept the contention of the Government of Pakistan that the Agreement of 4 May 1948 was accepted by them unwillingly and under compulsion.

5. The Government of Pakistan have asked that their communication of 24 August should be treated as notice of termination of the Agreement of 4 May 1948. The Government of India wish to point out that the Punjab Partition Committee approved of the Standstill Agreements executed by the Chief Engineers of East and West Punjab on 20 December 1947. At a subsequent meeting held on 26 and 27 May 1948, this Committee also formally noted the Inter-Dominion Agreement of 4 May 1948. The Government of India hold the view that the Agreement of 4 May 1948 must also be treated as an integral part of the arrangements made at the partition, which cannot be unilaterally terminated or abrogated by either side. For their part, the Government of India regard the Agreement as valid and they propose to abide by its terms.

6. The Government of Pakistan requests the Government of India to agree to accept the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice and to agree

to the immediate reference of the dispute over canal waters to that Court. The Government of India have never refused to refer this dispute for decision to an appropriate body, if negotiations should fail to result in agreement. But as a preliminary to reference to such a body, if that should become necessary, they have repeatedly urged a comprehensive investigation by fully qualified engineers of both Governments working together in order to determine the availability of water both to India and to Pakistan from the rivers of the Indus basin. They have done so in the conviction that whatever the legal claims of the two parties, the problem of the utilisation of the waters of these rivers should be resolved not in a spirit of narrow legalism but primarily with the desire to serve the needs and advance the welfare of the millions of human beings in both countries, whose contentment and prosperity depend upon the use of these waters. The Government of India are satisfied that no ad hoc body could decide the various issues involved, with due regard to human welfare, until the results of the investigation, which the Government of India have repeatedly proposed, become available. Once more the Government of India would request the Government of Pakistan to agree to such an investigation being started immediately. Since in paragraph 16 of the note under reply it is stated that the "Government of Pakistan will co-operate fully in any procedure for further clarification, verification and exchange of information desired by the Government of India," it should be possible to work out detailed plans for the investigation without difficulty or delay.

7. The Government of Pakistan have always expressed a preference for reference of the dispute over canal waters to the International Court of Justice. The Government of India do not question the high authority of that judicial body. There are two reasons, however, why they feel that this matter should be dealt with by an ad hoc tribunal. The first is that, for a correct and prompt settlement of the dispute, it will be necessary for those to whom adjudication of the dispute may be entrusted to appraise the relevant factual data in the light of firsthand knowledge of the geographical and engineering elements of the problem. This can be done more conveniently and effectively by a small group of persons working in India than by a court which has its seat at The Hague.

8. The other, and even more important, reason is the great urgency to settle the question of evacuee property. The continued failure to do so merely prolongs the sufferings of millions of refugees on both sides of the border, and the passions engendered by a sustained sense of frustration and grievance inevitably have an adverse effect on the relations between India and Pakistan. In order to ensure a prompt solution of this problem, the Government of India consider it desirable that it be referred immediately for decision to an ad hoc body. For obvious reasons, this task cannot be entrusted to the International Court of Justice. An ad hoc tribunal, working in the sub-continent,

could apply itself at once to the solution of both the problems, namely, the problem of evacuee property and the dispute over canal waters.

9. The Government of India accordingly propose that the two Governments should proceed to nominate, without delay, two judges from each country of the highest judicial standing to enquire into and to decide these two matters. Such a body will have the necessary attributes of impartiality and judicial competence. Since it will be working in the sub-continent, both Governments will find it more convenient and more economical to produce before its members the varied and voluminous data that would be needed for a complete understanding of these important and complicated issues. The experience and responsibility of the members should be a guarantee that they will approach these problems with the sole desire to do justice. They see no reason why a body so constituted should not be able to arrive at agreed conclusions on the issues referred to it.

10. In conclusion the Government of India would observe that they have limited their reply to the major and practical issues involved. They consider it unnecessary at this stage to comment on the other points arising out of the Pakistan Government's note of 23 August 1950.

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Camp Lake View Guest House
Hyderabad (Dn)
5 October 1950

My dear Sri Prakasa,

As you know, I have been of the view that we must attain self-sufficiency in jute and cotton in order to keep our two major industries going without any risk of curtailment or diminution of the supplies of raw materials. In both these matters, unfortunately, we are depending on Pakistan. The policy of self-sufficiency has been followed for some time. It has been accepted by the Cabinet also and we have been acting on the principle that the acreage under jute and cotton should be increased, even if it means some diminution in the area under food crops, and that Government should guarantee the States concerned that any increase in such acreage will not adversely affect supplies of foodgrains to them and that Government will make up the deficiency that might occur on this account. I need not dilate on the justification of this policy. Any country cognisant of its own interests would do it. In our case, the justification is even greater because with Pakistan, being an important source of supply of these raw materials and drifting away from trade with India to

other countries under a deliberate policy of its own, leaves us with practically no alternative.

I think we should review how this policy has worked and what is the economic balance-sheet of this policy. If you could kindly have a review made on these lines, it would serve, I think, a most useful purpose. Perhaps inter alia the following information could form the basis of such a review:

- (a) the progressive production of jute and cotton in India since 1947;
- (b) imports of jute and cotton from Pakistan into India during that period;
- (c) our requirements of raw jute and cotton;
- (d) the drain of foreign exchange from India to Pakistan on account of import of raw jute and cotton;
- (e) the areas where raw jute and cotton can be best grown and could be expanded;
- (f) if expansion of raw jute and cotton to the fullest extent of our requirements would result in diversion of some land from foodgrains to raw jute and cotton, the extent of such diversion; and
- (g) the economic results of an acre of land suitable either for paddy or wheat or any other competing food crop when brought under cultivation of either of the two crops.

Now that we have just finished one of the most critical periods in the history of the jute industry, thanks to the guidance, vigilance, drive and energy displayed by your Ministry under the able guidance of both yourself and your predecessor, I should like to take this opportunity to say that, if we had, at any time, been less conscious of our own interests we would have done irreparable harm to the economy of the country. I am sure I am not under-estimating the consequences that would have ensued when I say this. Pakistan did its worst to paralyse our industry and in spite of it we have survived. The credit for this is also due to the leaders of the industry and the State Governments who have throughout wholeheartedly co-operated with us. I am writing to you in this strain because, as you know, I have taken a great deal of interest in this problem and have shared with you as well as your predecessor the deep concern which we have throughout felt for this industry. If any appropriate occasion arises, do please convey this appreciation of mine to Mr.

Walker, Chairman of the Indian Jute Mills Association, and through him to its members.

I have not had any time to have some chat with you particularly about your Afghan tour and I am looking forward to my return to Delhi when I hope we shall have an early opportunity of meeting.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri Sri Prakasa
Minister for Commerce
New Delhi

316

EXTRACT FROM LETTER DATED 7 OCTOBER 1950 FROM MR.
SRI PRAKASA TO SARDAR PATEL

I thank you for your kind letter of 5 October from Hyderabad regarding jute. I am most grateful to you for the very kind things you say about myself which I scarcely deserve, for I must confess I feel rather lost in this Ministry and I am still trying to find my way through the mazes of its work and problems. Generous appreciation from elders like yourself is a source of great comfort and encouragement. I pray that I may prove worthy of it.

I shall come any time that it may be convenient to you. I myself wish very much that I could come oftener to you, but I am nervous lest I should be disturbing you in your work or encroaching upon your rest when you are more than busy and not too well either.

317

2 King Edward Road
New Delhi
27 October 1950

My dear Sardar Sahib,

You will have received my letter of 7 October acknowledging your kind letter of 5 October from Hyderabad (Deccan) regarding the economics of cotton and jute production, on the one hand, and food production, on the other. I regret this delay

in giving further and fuller information as desired, as much careful examination of the position was necessary to reply to all the points mentioned by you.

The Ministry has now completed a review of the subject and I am enclosing three appendices, A, B and C. The first brings out all the salient economic facts in the balance-sheet, if I might put it that way; while B specifically answers the seven questions that you had asked in the second paragraph of your letter, and C contains two statements showing the foreign exchange position as it would be if we were self-sufficient in jute and cotton against the present position. I hope that these documents will give you all the information that you have desired.

As you know, there is a difference of opinion as to the relative priority and importance of jute and cotton, on the one hand, and foodstuffs, on the other, in our programme of self-sufficiency. The whole subject needs to be thrashed out fully, and the facts as stated should help us to reach correct conclusions.

With respectful regards,

Yours sincerely,
Sri Prakasa

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

318

Camp Ahmedabad
31 October 1950

My dear Sri Prakasa,

Thank you for your letter dated 27 October 1950.

I am glad to find that the information which you have collected in regard to self-sufficiency in jute and cotton fully justifies the policy we have been pursuing hitherto. I feel that you can make out a very strong case for modifying our self-sufficiency programme and continuing to import foodgrains only with a view to securing self-sufficiency in cotton and jute. Of course, if by intensive cultivation of jute or by intensive cultivation of foodgrains we can acquire self-sufficiency in both and let the self-sufficiency programme be modified to the extent of required cotton cultivation only, it would be even better. On the whole,

I feel that the matter requires very careful consideration and the sooner whatever confusion there is among people on this issue is cleared by statistical analysis such as has now been furnished, the better. You might examine, therefore, whether we should not seek the orders of the Cabinet or at least bring these facts to the notice of the Cabinet in order to settle matters once for all.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri Sri Prakasa
New Delhi

319

New Delhi
28 September 1950

My dear Jagjivan Ram,

I have been receiving several telegrams from various associations all over India protesting against the provision in the Labour Relations Bill about retrenchment of staff on account of their being surplus to requirements or for other good cause. I remember this question was very carefully considered and elaborately discussed in the Cabinet and a formula satisfactory from the point of view of different interests involved as well as public interests was evolved. It appears that some change has been made in that formula. I should like to know how and why that change was made. It should have come to the Cabinet if any change was contemplated.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri Jagjivan Ram
Minister for Labour
New Delhi

New Delhi
9 September 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Your letter about Shrikant. Rajaji spoke to me yesterday and said that Jagjivan Ram had been discussing the question of this appointment of an officer for the Backward Classes. Rajaji thought that I should see Jagjivan Ram about it. I met him today. Jagjivan Ram said that Shrikant was a first-class worker, but he was more of a field worker and he would not be able to control his officers and any staff that he may have. Therefore, he thought that for this particular position he would not be suitable. He suggested some other name, one Malik of Bengal, a Scheduled Caste man. Rajaji did not approve of him. Jagjivan Ram has now suggested Bindeshwari Prasad Varma, who is now Speaker of the Bihar Assembly. I do not know anything about him. Jagjivan Ram has gone to the length of telephoning to Bindeshwari Prasad and asking him if he is agreeable. His answer was that he will do as Rajendra Bahu advises. So, that is the position.

About my meeting Shrikant in Bombay, I would gladly do so, but I am rather full up there for the few hours I am going to spend in Bombay. I shall arrive in the afternoon and spend the rest of the time at the Students' Convention and at some show that Lilawati Munshi¹ is organising. But, perhaps, I could meet Shrikant soon after my arrival at Government House, about 2 p.m. Perhaps he might telephone and fix some time.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

¹ Member, Rajya Sabha, Vice-President, Bharatya Vidya Bhavan, member, Film Advisory Board, Government of India, 1949-50; member, AICC, 1931-34

Camp Bombay
11 September 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter dated 9 September 1950 about Shrikant.

2. I am rather upset about the manner in which Jagjivan Ram has been canvassing for support and interfering in regard to the appointment of a Backward Classes Officer. I also feel hurt that Rajaji should not have put him wise and right; instead he asked you to see him. If Jagjivan Ram had any suggestions to make, he should have first referred to me and then the matter could have been placed before you with my reactions.

3. As regards Shrikant, he has been an MLA in Bombay since 1937. He has been in charge of Bhil Seva Sangh activities. Some of our Ministers have had less qualifications when they were called upon to take up their jobs. I see no reason, therefore, for any apprehension that he would be unable to control his officers or his staff. He would, of course, be independent and will not sacrifice his duty to somebody else's dictates. But that is as it should be.

4. I shall ask Shrikant to see you when you come here and to contact Government House on the 15th to fix some time. I am sure you will like him and his sense of public duty.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

New Delhi
14 September 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thank you for your letter of 11 September about the appointment of a Backward Classes officer.

I confess I did not see anything unusual or improper in Jagjivan Ram discussing this matter with Rajaji or me. He is naturally interested in the Backward Classes and would like to see a suitable person appointed. The appointment is that of the President and does not pertain to any particular Ministry. Even if it did, it is a very special appointment under the Constitution and hence we have been much exercised about a suitable man for it. When Jagjivan Ram spoke to Rajaji he did not know what, if any, steps had been taken about it. Rajaji quite naturally asked him to speak to me. You have not been here.

I shall try to see Shrikant in Bombay. I have had very good accounts of him from the people who have known him.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

Camp Nasik
16 September 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter dated 14 September 1950 about the appointment of a Backward Classes officer.

2. It is true that the appointment vests in the President but has to be made on the recommendation of the Minister, which recommendation has obviously to go through the Prime Minister. After the Constitution was passed, it was settled between the Law and Home Ministries that this function being of an administrative nature would be looked after by the Home Ministry. There was a difference of opinion as to which Ministry should be

in charge of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Orders. You yourself took the decision that the Home Ministry should be in charge of these matters. However, if you do not see anything unusual or improper in Jagjivan Ram discussing this matter with Rajaji or you without prior reference to me, I have nothing to say.

3. As regards Shrikant, you have already met him and after that we have had a discussion. He will now see the President as desired by you. Thereafter I shall submit my recommendation formally through you to the President.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Camp Nasik

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New Delhi
10 July 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Master Tara Singh will be coming here soon. Meanwhile, he is carrying on a tour of the Punjab, PEPSU, etc. The object of this tour is to demand a separate homeland for the Sikhs.

I think it would be desirable if the Ministers in the East Punjab Government as well as prominent Sikhs here said something about this demand. Remaining quiet will be misunderstood.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

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New Delhi
11 July 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter of 10 July regarding Master Tara Singh.

2. Masterji has already been here in Delhi since the 9th and has been making his speeches in the usual tone.

3. It is not merely Masterji's demand for a separate homeland for Sikhs which is to be opposed but his entire policy. Some time ago, I had asked Gopichand to ask Giani¹ to make a statement against Masterji's policy. As far as I remember, Giani did say something though after some hesitation. So far as the Nagoke group is concerned, their position is well known and they do not make any secret of opposing Masterji. I think some other statements have also appeared against Masterji's demand but they have been mostly from Nationalist Sikhs.

4. I think that before I ask Gopichand to do something on the lines you desire, we should ask Baldev Singh to do something on those lines. Once he does it, I am sure it will be followed up. Our main difficulty in regard to the Sikhs is that those with us do not take a definite hostile line to Masterji's politics. But if Baldev Singh did so, I am sure others will follow suit. I shall speak to him but, in the meantime, you might write to him on your own without indicating what I have written to you.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister

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New Delhi
11 July 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thank you for your letter of 11 July. I have written to Baldev Singh and enclose a copy of my letter.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

New Delhi
11 July 1950

My dear Baldev Singh,

I have been worried lately by the fresh campaign which Master Tara Singh has started. I am afraid Master Tara Singh is incapable of learning or of forgetting. The world may change, but he goes on in his old way. He is now again talking about a separate homeland for the Sikhs as well as many other things, which are entirely opposed to our policy. He talks about the terrible oppression of the Sikhs in the Punjab and perhaps elsewhere. I just do not understand all this business.

Here we are in the midst of grave international crises and with national problems of terrible importance. But Master Tara Singh is completely oblivious of what is happening and goes on repeating his old slogans and no doubt thus adding to the confusion. I think that it is the duty of Sikh leaders to dissociate themselves clearly from this policy and campaign of Master Tara Singh and that you should give a lead in this matter. We should not allow a mischievous turn of events to grow and assume importance.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal Nehru

The Hon'ble Sardar Baldev Singh
Minister for Defence
New Delhi

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New Delhi
14 July 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I am sending you Baldev Singh's letter as well as a copy of my reply.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

New Delhi
14 July 1950

My dear Panditji,

I entirely agree with what you have written in your letter dated 11 July 1950. I have an impression that Master Tara Singh has become absolutely desperate and that he does not know what he is talking about. His utterances are not only not in the interests of the country as a whole but detrimental to his community, the very cause he thinks he is pleading. I am constrained to add that this has been the lot of Akalis from the very beginning and I have often wondered how it was possible to make them realise the gravity of the situation.

I did hope that with the new order of things, matters would start improving in the Punjab. Many things have however been happening there which have given a handle to people like Master Tara Singh and men of his way of thinking. The main responsibility rests with the Punjab Government as also with the political organisation, the State Congress. I am sorry to have to say that both have contributed little towards the solution of the difficult problem of communal amity. In fact, things have been allowed to happen which have given a handle to communalists on both sides to go on with their propaganda. The declared policy of the State Government is that they will solve their local problems so as to create an atmosphere of cordiality between the communities but unfortunately this has not been achieved to the extent it should have been.

You will perhaps remember the recent byelection in the labour constituency in the Punjab. I was asked to help the Congress candidate which I did in spite of the opposition of the Akali Dal and the Forward Bloc and with the help of friends I succeeded in winning the seat for the Congress. This success had its effect on the Akali Dal and completely wiped out the Forward Bloc of which the so-called "General" Mohan Singh is president. Lately, another byelection has been held in one of the Sikh constituencies in Ferozepore district. I advised the State Congress to contest the seat and put up the most suitable candidate. On account of party factions amongst Sikh groups they could not adopt the candidate who should have won and this was because he belonged to the opposite group of the official Congress group in power. The State Congress, after having carried on a lot of propaganda, later declared that they were not going to contest this seat. It was a great mistake. The

1. Such a state if and when created will isolate the Sikh Panth from the rest of the country and it will thus shatter the solidarity of the Sikh community which is already weakened by the partition of the country.
2. In case of any trouble with Pakistan such as small Sikh state will be sandwiched between the Dominions of India and Pakistan. This will be a horrible position which we cannot even imagine properly. It will be most disastrous for the Sikhs.
3. The majority of the Sikhs in such a proposed Sikh state is of Jats who look down upon non-Jat Sikhs with contempt. The plight of the non-Jat Sikhs cannot be very happy in such a state. Most of us belong to the non-Jat category and hence we cannot favour the creation of such a state.
4. If a Sikh state is demanded it means that the majority of those Sikhs who are living outside the Punjab in other parts of India such as Delhi, UP, CP, Bengal, Bombay, and elsewhere, shall have to leave those areas and this will mean a hell of misery and ruination for the Sikhs who are gainfully employed in different trades and professions in several parts of India.

Our respected leader, Shriman Baba Kharak Singhji, is very much against the proposal for the creation of a separate Sikh state. He believes that the Sikh Panth can progress with the rest of the Indian nation and he is a staunch advocate of unity. But he feels that in certain quarters, due to the communal-minded policy of some of the Government officials, discriminatory treatment is being meted out to some of the Sikhs in the services and in the army. Such people go and tell their tales of woe and misery to their Sikh brethren and this gives a handle to communal agitators like Master Tara Singh and others of his kind to exploit the sentiments of the innocent Sikh masses. Babaji honestly believes that India today has no better man to replace you and he and his followers are convinced that the destiny of the nation in general and the Sikh Panth in particular is safe in your hands. We have always supported your Government because we honestly feel that the present Government (with all its shortcomings) is the best Government under the present circumstances. But we request you to kindly see to the several complaints made by the Sikhs in the services. Many of them have gone to Babaji on several occasions and they have related to Babaji their tales of misery and grievances. Babaji does not want to take any step which may embarrass the National Government at a critical time when it is engaged in solving many knotty international problems facing the world and which is also busy in meeting many domestic problems. Babaji has asked me to bring this to your notice and as your friend and wellwisher Babaji expects that you will kindly look into such things.

We also feel that in certain matters regarding Sikh politics some of the leaders and officials in the Government have adopted a dubious policy which is placing the nationalist Sikhs at a great disadvantage. For instance, the

appointment of Giani Kartar Singh as Minister in the Punjab at such a time means a great strength to the Akali camp and a big blow for the nationalist Sikhs. Giani Kartar Singh and his colleagues fought the elections in 1946 against the Congress and they did everything to down the Congress. The appointment of Sardar Baldev Singh is also not very much favoured by the nationalist Sikhs. We honestly believe that he is still supporting Master Tara Singh and his party secretly. The Ajit (a daily Urdu paper) was started in Lahore in 1943 with the capital of Sardar Baldev Singh and I have ample proof to show that even today the paper has the backing of Sardar Baldev Singh and Giani Kartar Singh. You look into the files of the Ajit and you will come to know how much friendship this party has for the Congress.

The elections are coming and the Akalis have started the communal propaganda so vehemently in the Punjab that they are telling us that they shall see how a Sikh can dare to stand on the Congress ticket. They intimidate our men and workers with all sorts of things and yet we fail to understand as to why no action is taken against all such activities.

Since no nationalist Sikh has any position in the Government, the masses run after Giani Kartar Singh, Sardar Baldev Singh and their supporters who are in the Government whenever they want any assistance either in the matter of service, job, loan, land allotment or any such thing. They feel that the nationalist Sikhs have nothing to offer them. This creates a very demoralizing effect. I am afraid if things are allowed to exist as they are today the community will drift towards reactionary ends. The result will be that even those who are with the Congress today will join the Akalis and in the coming elections we shall lose our all.

I suggest that you should advise your colleagues and through them the officials of your Government that they should in future give proper consideration to the nationalist element amongst the Sikhs. To stop the tendency towards communal politics the best course is to give no accommodation to those who have been opposing the Congress tooth and nail in the past and those who are secretly engaged even today in helping the activities of those who are out to subvert the present national Government.

I am sorry to have addressed this letter to you in such a strong and blunt strain, but since we take you as our most trusted leader and best sympathiser in whom we can repose our secrets I hope you will take it in the spirit in which it has been written. Not that we want any jobs from you or your Government, but because we feel that we must bring such things to your notice with a request to mend matters suitably. I can assure you that the majority of the intelligent Sikhs believe in your leadership and they have full confidence in your personality. We leave everything to your sense of justice and equity.

Akali Dal's candidate won and as a result the Congress has lost its prestige and given yet another fillip to Master Tara Singh and his associates. If the Congress had contested this seat, which with whole-hearted effort it could have won, then this would have dealt a severe blow to the Akalis. The fact is that the Punjab Congress does not function in a realistic way and that explains much of how Master Tara Singh has been able to exploit the situation. There are many instances of like and other nature that are an impetus to the opposition in the Punjab. The evil of communalism is an old disease in my province. Sufferings brought about by partition, delays in rehabilitation and scramble for office and power have all worked on people's minds. Added to it is the general weakness of administration and the Congress organisation. Master Tara Singh lives and acts in this bewilderment and has, I am afraid, himself lost all sense of realities. This is my honest conviction.

I have not the least liking for what Master Tara Singh stands and am clear in my mind that what he preaches is detrimental to the country and his own community. I have on several occasions repudiated his stand publicly before and I have therefore no hesitation in doing so again. There are, I know, some mischievous people in the Punjab, who, for their own political ends, connect Master Tara Singh with me. This is wholly and entirely untrue. I have never in my life acted contrary to what I profess to believe; I would much rather sacrifice my political career than do so. I am quite prepared to take up any lead to show him up and shoulder any responsibility that you entrust me. I have, after consulting some friends, called a meeting of the ex-Panthic MLAs. for 23 July in order to take an organised stand against the disastrous effect of Master Tara Singh's activities. I shall be grateful for your guidance in the matter.

Yours sincerely,
Baldev Singh

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister
New Delhi

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New Delhi
20 July 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter of 14 July 1950.

I am returning herewith Baldev Singh's letter to you which you had enclosed with it. I think we might await the result of

the conference which Baldev Singh has called. They might be able to present a united front as a result of the conference.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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New Delhi
30 July 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I enclose a letter which I have received from Sardar Santokh Singh Vidyarthi. I have suggested to him that he and his colleagues *might wait upon you and explain their viewpoint to you.* Much that he has written in this letter has weight and I have no doubt that the Akali Party is a most unreliable companion.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

6 Aurangzeb Road
New Delhi
30 July 1950

Shriman Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister
New Delhi

Respected Panditji,

I hope you have been reading the statements made by Master Tara Singh from time to time in the past few weeks with regard to the creation of the so-called Punjabi-speaking province or the Sikh State. I have replied to the statements from time to time and I believe the demand made by Master Tara Singh for the creation of a separate Sikh State in the Punjab has not the support of the Sikh intelligentsia. We the Nationalist Sikhs are opposed to such a move on several grounds:

1. Such a state if and when created will isolate the Sikh Panth from the rest of the country and it will thus shatter the solidarity of the Sikh community which is already weakened by the partition of the country.
2. In case of any trouble with Pakistan such as small Sikh state will be sandwiched between the Dominions of India and Pakistan. This will be a horrible position which we cannot even imagine properly. It will be most disastrous for the Sikhs.
3. The majority of the Sikhs in such a proposed Sikh state is of Jats who look down upon non-Jat Sikhs with contempt. The plight of the non-Jat Sikhs cannot be very happy in such a state. Most of us belong to the non-Jat category and hence we cannot favour the creation of such a state.
4. If a Sikh state is demanded it means that the majority of those Sikhs who are living outside the Punjab in other parts of India such as Delhi, UP, CP, Bengal, Bombay, and elsewhere, shall have to leave those areas and this will mean a hell of misery and ruination for the Sikhs who are gainfully employed in different trades and professions in several parts of India.

Our respected leader, Shriman Baba Kharak Singhji, is very much against the proposal for the creation of a separate Sikh state. He believes that the Sikh Panth can progress with the rest of the Indian nation and he is a staunch advocate of unity. But he feels that in certain quarters, due to the communal-minded policy of some of the Government officials, discriminatory treatment is being meted out to some of the Sikhs in the services and in the army. Such people go and tell their tales of woe and misery to their Sikh brethren and this gives a handle to communal agitators like Master Tara Singh and others of his kind to exploit the sentiments of the innocent Sikh masses. Babaji honestly believes that India today has no better man to replace you and he and his followers are convinced that the destiny of the nation in general and the Sikh Panth in particular is safe in your hands. We have always supported your Government because we honestly feel that the present Government (with all its shortcomings) is the best Government under the present circumstances. But we request you to kindly see to the several complaints made by the Sikhs in the services. Many of them have gone to Babaji on several occasions and they have related to Babaji their tales of misery and grievances. Babaji does not want to take any step which may embarrass the National Government at a critical time when it is engaged in solving many knotty international problems facing the world and which is also busy in meeting many domestic problems. Babaji has asked me to bring this to your notice and as your friend and wellwisher Babaji expects that you will kindly look into such things.

We also feel that in certain matters regarding Sikh politics some of the leaders and officials in the Government have adopted a dubious policy which is placing the nationalist Sikhs at a great disadvantage. For instance, the

appointment of Giani Kartar Singh as Minister in the Punjab at such a time means a great strength to the Akali camp and a big blow for the nationalist Sikhs. Giani Kartar Singh and his colleagues fought the elections in 1946 against the Congress and they did everything to down the Congress. The appointment of Sardar Baldev Singh is also not very much favoured by the nationalist Sikhs. We honestly believe that he is still supporting Master Tara Singh and his party secretly. The Ajit (a daily Urdu paper) was started in Lahore in 1943 with the capital of Sardar Baldev Singh and I have ample proof to show that even today the paper has the backing of Sardar Baldev Singh and Giani Kartar Singh. You look into the files of the Ajit and you will come to know how much friendship this party has for the Congress.

The elections are coming and the Akalis have started the communal propaganda so vehemently in the Punjab that they are telling us that they shall see how a Sikh can dare to stand on the Congress ticket. They intimidate our men and workers with all sorts of things and yet we fail to understand as to why no action is taken against all such activities.

Since no nationalist Sikh has any position in the Government, the masses run after Giani Kartar Singh, Sardar Baldev Singh and their supporters who are in the Government whenever they want any assistance either in the matter of service, job, loan, land allotment or any such thing. They feel that the nationalist Sikhs have nothing to offer them. This creates a very demoralizing effect. I am afraid if things are allowed to exist as they are today the community will drift towards reactionary ends. The result will be that even those who are with the Congress today will join the Akalis and in the coming elections we shall lose our all.

I suggest that you should advise your colleagues and through them the officials of your Government that they should in future give proper consideration to the nationalist element amongst the Sikhs. To stop the tendency towards communal politics the best course is to give no accommodation to those who have been opposing the Congress tooth and nail in the past and those who are secretly engaged even today in helping the activities of those who are out to subvert the present national Government.

I am sorry to have addressed this letter to you in such a strong and blunt strain, but since we take you as our most trusted leader and best sympathiser in whom we can repose our secrets I hope you will take it in the spirit in which it has been written. Not that we want any jobs from you or your Government, but because we feel that we must bring such things to your notice with a request to mend matters suitably. I can assure you that the majority of the intelligent Sikhs believe in your leadership and they have full confidence in your personality. We leave everything to your sense of justice and equity.

With best wishes and kind regards,

Yours sincerely,
Santokh Singh Vidyarthi
Secretary
All-India Nationalist Sikh Party, and
Private Secretary to Shriman Baba
Kharak Singhji

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New Delhi
31 July 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

Thank you for your letter dated 30 July 1950, with which you enclosed a letter from Santokh Singh Vidyarthi. Santokh Singh Vidyarthi and some others belonging to the same persuasion have been seeing me from time to time. Baba Kharak Singh is undoubtedly a good and well-intentioned individual, but the question is whether he and his nationalist Sikh friends have any following and can deliver the goods. As far as I can judge, they cannot. Except for the label, name and the occasional statements in the Press, the party as such has not made any headway and for all practical purposes cannot be regarded as effective. The answer to Master Tara Singh's activities cannot come from such a party, but must come from those who are better organised and more active and can command better following. I have already had talks with the leading so-called Panthic Sikhs who are members of the Congress Party and the indications are that they are going to make a definite stand against Master Tara Singh. I feel that it is much better to create this opposition than to alienate it. I agree that there are risks in this, but I am sure that by a mixture of alertness and caution we would be able to keep them on the right track. In any case, as far as I can see the nationalist Sikhs will not be able to raise any effective opposition to the Akali Party's activities.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

PS.

I am sure you know that the Nationalist Sikh Party does not consist of the Congress Sikhs.

CHAPTER XVI
AT HIS POST TILL THE END

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16 Woburn Square
London WC 1
18 April 1950

Dear Sardarji,

I wonder if you will consider dictating about six articles (2,000-2,500 word)s on some main episodes of your life for publication in the foreign Press, European, British and American. I have had talks with some editors and publishers, who showed keen interest in the possibility of securing rights of your reminiscences. Busy as you are, it may still be possible for you to spare a little time to dictate your autobiography, which, it is needless to add, will be of great interest to the public and of immeasurable value to posterity.

Will you please let me have a line at your early convenience (if possible by cable)?

Do you not think that the whole of our propaganda machine abroad requires co-ordination, overhauling and complete re-organisation?

Best regards from,

Yours sincerely,
P. B. Seal

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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New Delhi
26 April 1950

My dear Seal,

Thank you for your letter of 18 April 1950.

I am afraid it will not be possible for me to accede to your wishes. I have neither the time nor the inclination, in my present preoccupations, to write anything on the subject which you have mentioned.

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With best regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri P. B. Seal
16 Woburn Square
London WC 1

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New Delhi
3 November 1950

My dear Mr. Ambassador,

I am most grateful to Your Excellency for the very kind letter of congratulations which you were good enough to send me on my birthday. I deeply appreciate the friendliness, generosity and good will underlying the sentiments which you have expressed on this occasion.

On my return I find that my reference in a speech in Ahmedabad to Your Excellency's Press interview at Bombay has not been reproduced in the papers here. I, therefore, take the liberty of enclosing the relevant extract.

With kind regards and renewed thanks,

Yours very sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

His Excellency Mr. Loy Henderson
Ambassador Extraordinary and
Plenipotentiary for USA
USA Embassy
New Delhi

ENCLOSURE

EXTRACT

3 November 1950

A few days ago, the Ambassador of America to India, Mr. Loy Henderson, gave a Press interview in Bombay. He said his country was alive to our economic condition, was sympathetic towards us and would try to help us. We should be grateful to him for this offer of assistance. If you feel that because of pride or suspicion, or of the fear of criticism, that it will be considered alignment with

one bloc, you should not avail yourself of the offer, it would be a mistake. If any country desires to extend assistance to us with a view to helping us we should accept it and should not view it with suspicion. India has attained freedom by its own efforts and by the grace of God. It does not have to fear anyone. Other countries fully understand this. If with good intentions any country offers its assistance to enable us to stand on our legs, infant India should not refuse the offer. Many people say that we should not take the help of America because we will lose our prestige and we will be blamed for joining one bloc. We are not so ignorant as not to realise our own position and interest. Throughout its history America has never had any desire for colonial power. To extend help to strengthen us as a nation is its desire. If we have faith in ourselves, we should not mind if any other country is jealous of us.

Hindustan Times,
New Delhi

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American Embassy
New Delhi
10 November 1950

Dear Mr. Deputy Prime Minister,

I wish to thank you for your kind letter of 3 November and to express my appreciation of your courtesy in letting me have the excerpt from your speech in Ahmedabad referring to my Press conference in Bombay.

I want to take this occasion to tell you how encouraged I am at what seems to me to be the growing understanding between our two respective countries—a development which, in my opinion, is to our mutual advantage as well as in the interest of international peace and security.

With kindest personal regards,

Sincerely yours,
Loy W. Henderson

His Excellency the Deputy Prime Minister of India
New Delhi

11 November 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I saw this report sent by Iengar at your instance.

PM may object that we have no right to get Intelligence men to watch Ministers of Cabinet.

But the fact remains that the Minister is actively fomenting differences. The passage I have marked with blue pencil is interesting.

Yours sincerely,
C. Rajagopalachari

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

ENCLOSURE

COPY OF DAILY REPORT FROM THE CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE OFFICER,
MADHYA PRADESH, NAGPUR, DATED 3 NOVEMBER 1950, TO THE
DIRECTOR, INTELLIGENCE BUREAU, NEW DELHI

Congress

Hon'ble Shri Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, who visited Jubbulpure on an official visit, was accorded a public reception by the Nagpur Congress Committee, Jubbulpure, at a public meeting of 700 on 27 October. Shri Kidwai, in his speech, impressed upon his hearers the need to form a strong group in opposition to rectify the defects in the Congress and exhorted them not to hesitate to quit the Congress if it had no place for their principles.

Referring to independence, he remarked that it came to them much earlier than they were prepared for it and consequent inability of the Congress to run the administration efficiently. He gave out that there were two groups in the Central Cabinet and said that while one desired to purge the Congress organisation of undesirables with a strong hand, the other wanted to accomplish it gradually without letting others know about it. According to the Press, Shri Kidwai is also reported to have said that China would be repeated in India in case there was no scope for healthy opposition to function in the legislatures.

2. The same evening at a dinner arranged by Niranjan Singh, a disgruntled Congress MLA, at the residence of Laxman Singh Chouhan in honour of Shri Kidwai, prominent, among others, were P. K. Thakur, Shanti

Mukerji, both communists, Dr. George D'Silva, B. P. Tiwari, K. P. Pande, Sawaimal Jain, who belonged to the anti-official Congress group. Shri Kidwai gave an outline of the "Janata Congress" formed in Uttar Pradesh and advocated its formation at Jubbulpure with a view to contesting the forthcoming elections. The disgruntled Congressmen promised to chalk out a tentative plan for the formation of "Janata Congress" or "the united anti-Congress front" in the immediate future to be finally approved by Shri Kidwai.

3. Shri Kidwai after the dinner went to the house of Vishnudayal Bhargava with the party where a group of disgruntled Congressmen of Jubbulpure city promised to organise Janata Congress under the leadership of Shri Kidwai who, in return, promised to visit Jubbulpure once again for giving necessary guidance.

4. The group of disgruntled Congressmen of Jubbulpure is also contemplating to hold a conference of Jubbulpure district ex-political prisoners some time towards the end of November or the beginning of December 1950. Acharya Kripalani and Shri Kidwai are being invited to attend the same.

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New Delhi

13 November 1950

My dear Rajaji,

I have seen your note on the copy of the report which Iengar sent to you on Rafi Ahmed Kidwai's visit to Jubbulpure.

2. The report need not necessarily have been the result of any CID officers keeping the Minister under watch. I know for a fact that no officer of the Central Intelligence Bureau was detailed for the purpose. As you know, such things cannot remain secret. It is quite likely that the local CID officers got all this news from Congressmen who attended the various meetings, pieced them together and sent a note to the Provincial CID headquarters from whom our CID got it. I know that a copy of a fuller version has been given to the Prime Minister by Dwarka Prasad Mishra.¹ They, of course, take the view that it is most objectionable on the part of a Central Minister to interfere with the Congress affairs of the State, involve as they do the Ministers of the State Government. Jubbulpure is, as you know, Dwarka Prasad's constituency.

¹ M.L.A. (Central); Home Minister, CP, 1937-39; member, CWC, 1950; VC of Saugar University, 1956-61; Chief Minister, Madhya Pradesh, 1963-67; member, Central Parliamentary Board, Congress Working Committee

3. While I am on this subject, you might be interested to know that in another case, the Prime Minister, without reference to me or having mentioned it to me even now, detailed an officer of the Central Intelligence Bureau to make inquiries in regard to the Chief Minister of a province. A contractor of Delhi saw Rafi Ahmed Kidwai with a complaint of corruption. The matter went to the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister sent for the officer concerned and asked him to look into this matter after hearing the complainant who was kept present and who had apparently approached the Prime Minister earlier. It was after the officer had met the complainant that he suggested that he could not do any further inquiry without reference to the head of the Bureau. The officer informed the head of the Bureau, who then asked him to tell the Prime Minister that the Home Secretary should be brought into the picture if the matter was to be further pursued. It was then that the Home Secretary was sent for and told what the matter was. It was at that stage that I came to know about this thing from the Home Secretary.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri C. Rajagopalachari
Cabinet Minister
New Delhi

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817 Fifth Avenue
New York 21 N.Y.
13 November 1950

Dear Sardarji,

I am sorry to trouble you about a personal matter when you are busy and preoccupied with so many critical problems. Ours is a very small delegation, as you know; and with Dr. Keskar's departure it is impossible for any of us to leave New York before the end of the General Assembly session, about 15 December. I am planning to return to India as soon as I can do so. I understand that a decision is likely to be taken early in December on the selection of candidates for Parliament for the general elections next year. I have been out of India a good deal on United Nations work during the last three or four years. About my work, whether in the United Nations or in Parliament (and

on its various committees) it is not necessary for me to say anything, as you are in a position to judge for yourself. I would, however, add that if I am elected again, I will continue to work in the spirit and with the zeal that have characterised my work all these years.

My brother's health has been very satisfactory. He has practically regained his normal weight, and the surgeon who performed the operation last May was extremely pleased with his general condition. He may go to him again after the General Assembly session for his "periodical check-up," as they call it in America.

Some of us have been doing a good deal of public speaking, whenever we can manage to get away from the United Nations, on India's role in Asia and our foreign policy. I addressed a very appreciative audience in Chicago last Friday and am going to Cornell University on 1 December. These meetings are useful in clearing up many misunderstandings and suspicions about India.

I hope your health continues to be good. It must be an anxious time for the Government, with the latest developments in Nepal adding to your problems.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
B. Shiva Rao

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

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New Delhi
17 November 1950

My dear Shiva Rao,

Thank you for your letter of 13 November 1950.

2. I do not think anybody has yet started thinking in terms of candidates for elections. As you must have learnt, we have decided to postpone the elections until November 1952 and consequently there does not seem to be any hurry about it. Very probably, things will not be decided so soon and there will probably be ample time even after you return.

3. I am very glad to know that Sir B. N.'s health has now much improved and I do hope he will maintain the improvement in spite of the extreme pressure on his time which his duties to

UNO entail. As I wrote to him, he has made a splendid job of his appointment and I hope he will continue to do so.

4. I have had rather adverse reports about the feeling in America against us. I do not know how far this is due to elections. You are, however, in a better position to assess it and I do hope you and your colleagues will continue to put forward our point of view and to remove misunderstandings or hostility.

4 I am sorry my health at present is not too good. I am having some intestinal trouble which has been worrying me for the last few days. However, I hope to get over it in a few days.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

Shri B. Shiva Rao
C/o Indian Delegation
817 Fifth Avenue
New York, 21 N.Y.

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EXTRACT

817 Fifth Avenue
New York 21, N.Y.
30 November 1950

My dear Sardarji,

Thank you very much for your letter. I am very sorry to learn that you have not been well. I hope you have been resting, though with all the exciting developments in Nepal and Tibet—not to mention our chronic troubles in Kashmir and Pakistan. I doubt whether one in your position can relax at the present moment. My brother is most grateful to you for your extremely kind reference to his work in the UN.

I hope to be in New Delhi in the first week of January.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,
B. Shiva Rao

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

[N.B.: The Sardar's secretary replied on 21 December 1950 stating that the letter "arrived too late for him to peruse it." The Sardar died on 15 December 1950.]

New Delhi
16 November 1950

My dear Rajaji,

My intestine trouble still persists and there is some pain which is occasionally quite severe. I do not think I shall be able to come to Parliament tomorrow and would be grateful if you could kindly take up the burden of replying to the questions, as it happens to be my question hour tomorrow.

I hope you will be able to do so. I shall have the Parliament pad sent to you later in the evening, as soon as it is ready. If you want Shankar to come and explain any points, he can come any time tomorrow morning that you would like him to.

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri C. Rajagopalachari
Cabinet Minister
New Delhi

New Delhi
30 November 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

I am sending herewith the file relating to the case of Mr. Sayadiants, on which you noted on 19 November 1950. Below your note I have placed mine containing my views of the case, on the basis of which I hope you will reconsider your previous view.

There is, however, one aspect of the case, which I could not place on the file. You will notice that our action to terminate the residence of Mr. Sayadiants in India was taken with the concurrence of the External Affairs Ministry, and we were told that you had agreed to the course which we had proposed. We had reached almost the end of the case, when, on a representation from Mr. Sayadiants, you have thought it fit to intervene. I am

sure you agree that a change in the entire course of the case at such a late stage is apt to demoralise the administrative machinery. As a result of such instances, officers in the Secretariat as well as outsiders are apt to feel less sure of themselves and the orders which emanate from Government and to become less enthusiastic in the execution of orders. It is true that, at the stage at which the matter was referred to you previously, you had not gone into the facts of the case or seen any papers, but the fact remains that the Foreign Secretary thought he had your concurrence and the Home Ministry also felt that the action had your approval. To change the orders at this stage is, in my view, likely to engender a feeling among the officers of both the Home and External Affairs Ministries that they have been let down.

I would request you kindly to bear this aspect in mind when you give further consideration to this case. I have placed this aspect fully and frankly, because I have been sensing a feeling of inertia growing amongst officers on the ground that we do not take definite and final decisions and that there is a great deal of vacillation and uncertainty in our policies and decisions.

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Shri Jawaharlal Nehru
New Delhi

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New Delhi
1 December 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thank you for your letter of 30 November about the case of Sayadiants. I am very sorry that you have to spend time and energy over such secondary matters when you are unwell. I do not see why you should bother yourself. I am looking into this file again. But I do not propose to trouble you any more about it. I shall send for H.V.R. Iengar later.

There is, however, one matter that you mention which has a certain importance. You say that interference at a late stage is apt to demoralise the administrative machinery. Of course it is normally not desirable to allow a matter to proceed far and then interfere. But surely the main objective should be always to see that a right decision is arrived at. If a mistake is discovered at any

stage, it should be corrected. Whether a mistake has been made or not, is a question of fact and judgment. I do not see why the administrative machine should be upset or demoralised by such rare instances. After all, the final judgment in such matters must rest with the Ministers.

In the present case, before coming to any decision and before writing any note on the file, I gave the whole file to Girja Shanker Bajpai and asked him to give me his opinion in regard to the matter. He told me later that he had studied the file and come to the conclusion that there was not sufficient material to take the action suggested against Sayadiants. His independent opinion fitted in with mine. He sent for H.V.R. Iengar and, I believe, had a talk with him. I spoke to the Foreign Secretary about it.

There is no question that it is the right of Government to get rid of a foreign person who is considered undesirable. The whole question is in what circumstances a person should be considered undesirable for this purpose. While ultimately it is a matter of judgment, that judgment is based on certain definite data and should not be a mere impression or the judgment merely of police officers who, in the nature of things, have not got a political background or an appreciation of many aspects of a case which are not before them. Action of this kind taken has certain consequences. Our own people abroad are likely to be treated in a like way and then we resent it.

I remember the case of a Chinese schoolmaster who was, I believe, ultimately deported from India in spite of strong and repeated protests of the then Chinese Government. Dr. Lo came to the Foreign Office repeatedly begging us not to take any step. He actually shed tears on one occasion. We stuck, however, to our decisions, I think wrongly, and thus affected somewhat our relations with the old Government of China.

In reading police and intelligence reports, I come across frequently accounts of people I know very intimately. I have read with surprise and some amusement the comments in the report about these persons. These comments are often quite wide of the mark, as I know from my personal knowledge. Hence one has to be a little careful about these judgments.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
New Delhi

New Delhi
2 December 1950

My dear Pantji,

I am sending herewith a copy of a letter which I have received from Jairamdas about loan of some UP Armed Police to Assam. Kindly let me know whether the proposal he has made is feasible and whether you would be able to accommodate him.

Yours sincerely,
Vallabhbhai Patel

The Hon'ble Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant
Chief Minister
Uttar Pradesh
Lucknow

ENCLOSURE

Shillong
29 November 1950

My dear Sardar,

In view of recent internal happenings in Assam and the call which the developments in Tibet make on the Assam Rifles and the Army, the State Government has ultimately come to the conclusion that they must increase the strength of their own Armed Police. This has been the recommendation of the Home Ministry to the Assam Government for some time past, and now the Assam Government have made up their mind to raise seven platoons of Armed Police, that is a total strength of 350. The recruitment of local men will, however, take time and so also their training in the use of the rifle and other functions. The emergency on the contrary is such that an immediate increase in the strength of the Armed Police of Assam is badly needed without waiting for recruitment and several months of training. The Assam Government would like to get the help of the UP in this matter and had approached the UP to lend Assam 350 Armed Policemen to meet its urgent need. But it seems the UP Government is not willing to lend any of its men at present as it feels that in view of the Tibetan development, it would need the Armed Police for its own border. This I can well understand because the

UP must naturally be anxious to take proper care of its border against any infiltration from the north. But I think there is one solution which would meet the situation both for the UP and Assam. The UP Government had recently demobilised a large number of their Armed Police. This is, therefore, the source from which fresh recruitment could easily be made. But it will be impossible for the Assam Government to manage this recruitment in the UP on its own behalf. The easier solution is that the UP may be requested to re-recruit about 350 Armed Constables for its own services from among these demobilised persons and give to the Government of Assam the loan of 350 of its (UP) Armed Police. This would be the quickest and most feasible way of meeting the needs of both the provinces. It will be a very good thing if Pantji could take this step to help Assam. Could you kindly write to him drawing attention to our peculiar situation at present and the manner in which the UP could both assist Assam and meet its own needs?

Yours sincerely,
Jairamdas Dowlatram

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
New Delhi

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Lucknow
8 December 1950

My dear Sardar Sahib,

I have to thank you for your letter of the 2nd with which you were pleased to pass on to me the letter of the Governor of Assam about the additional armed police that the Assam Government need for the protection of their borders. I fully appreciate their desire to increase the strength of their armed police.

As they were informed it is rather difficult for us to spare three companies out of our own Provincial Armed Constabulary. In view however of the emergency with which the Assam Government is faced I have persuaded the Inspector-General of Police and he has reluctantly agreed to lend three companies to the Assam Government on the terms on which our men were previously sent to Hyderabad. It is not easy for us to manage even temporarily without any part of our limited force at present, but we want to render whatever assistance we can to Assam which has recently suffered from various calamities and has now to meet unexpected developments on its northern frontier. But it will not

S. G. X-30

be possible to maintain or extend this arrangement beyond six months. On the expiry of this period of six months these companies should be returned and sent back to the province. We are prepared to help Assam by taking steps to raise recruits from among the demobilised soldiers or discharged armed constables, but people belonging to this province will not feel happy in Assam and may not stick to their posts even after they have agreed to join the police force there. However we will be prepared to do what we can to persuade them to join the Assam service. But it will not be fair to recruit them for service in the province and then to send them to Assam. If the Assam Government so desire arrangements can be made on these lines.

Yours sincerely,
G. B. Pant

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Deputy Prime Minister
Government of India
New Delhi

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New Delhi
12 December 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I am glad to learn that you had a safe and more or less comfortable journey to Bombay. I hope that in the milder climate of Bombay you will recover rapidly. In any event, I am quite sure that you should have a good rest and, as I told you, not worry or burden yourself with any work. Your recovery to health is the primary consideration at present. I do hope that you will try to forget our troubles and think of present-day topics.

On return from the aerodrome, after seeing you off, I had a talk with Rajaji about what arrangements should be made so that you might not be troubled by references and official papers. We came to the conclusion that it would be desirable for some one to take temporary charge of your Ministries. I naturally thought of Rajaji being the obvious person for this. But he was very much averse to undertaking any formal responsibility, although he said that he would help in every way and be always available for consultation. But he did not want to be burdened with the routine work. We felt, of course, that any important matter should not

only be considered in consultation between us, but should also, when necessary, be referred to you.

I consulted Gopalaswami Ayyangar also and he pressed Rajaji to agree to my suggestion. But Rajaji still felt reluctant. In the end, there was no other course open to me but to accept Rajaji's advice in the matter, and we decided that this temporary charge should be undertaken by Gopalaswami Ayyangar and me. That is to say, Gopalaswami Ayyangar to be in charge of the Ministry of States and I in charge of the Ministry of Home Affairs. It was agreed that Rajaji should always be available to both of us for consultation and advice. In fact all three of us should confer, when necessary, and refer any matter we thought important enough to you.

I went to the President and told him of our talks. He expressed his agreement with what we proposed doing. I also sent for V.P. Menon and H.V.R. Iengar and spoke to them about it.

I have now written a note on this subject, a copy of which I enclose.

I earnestly hope that you will not trouble yourself over our day-to-day worries and look after your own health. I shall keep you informed of developments on important matters. I have asked V.P. Menon and H.V.R. Iengar not to burden you with papers and references.

I hope to see you in Bombay on my way to England. When I go away, I shall of course have to make some other temporary arrangements for the Home Ministry. Presumably, Rajaji will then agree to take it up.

Yours sincerely,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

ENCLOSURE

PRIME MINISTER'S SECRETARIAT

In view of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's ill-health it is absolutely necessary that he should have complete rest and freedom from worry, so as to be able to recuperate as rapidly as possible. For this purpose he has gone to Bombay and is likely to remain there during the winter months. During this period he should not have the burden of looking after the work of the Ministries under his charge. Therefore, no work should be sent to him and no references made to him in regard to the work of these Ministries.

During Sardar Patel's absence from Delhi temporary charge of his Ministries will be held as follows:

Ministry of States:.....Shri Gopalaswami Ayyangar.

Ministry of Home Affairs:.....Prime Minister.

This will be in addition to the Ministries held at present by Shri Gopalaswami Ayyangar and the Prime Minister. The Ministers in temporary charge will, whenever necessary, consult Sardar Patel.

Jawaharlal Nehru

12 December 1950

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New Delhi
11 December 1950

My dear Jawaharlal,

I learnt from Iengar [Home Secretary] some time ago that you had sent for Handoo [of the Intelligence Bureau], and subsequently sent for Iengar, about the investigation of certain allegations made by one Dhankumar Jain against Dr. Gopichand Bhargava. I also got the impression from him that Rafi [Ahmed Kidwai] had moved in the matter. Subsequently, I sent for the papers and saw Handoo's diary in regard to the day-to-day developments in the case. In addition, Iengar told me about certain things which Handoo could not commit to paper.

There are some aspects of this matter which trouble me greatly and have been causing me concern ever since I first came to know of it. In the first place, apart from anything else, I am sure you will agree that the importance of the case justified that I should know about it. Secondly, I was rather taken aback that you had considered it necessary to follow up in this manner allegations made against a very respected and tried colleague of ours who was the head of the administration of a State. Thirdly, I regard it as rather strange that a colleague of mine should make a move in the matter without even the ordinary courtesy of informing me or bringing to my knowledge whatever facts came to his notice. I have felt this all deeply not only because I feel that such methods are likely to undermine the prestige of a Minister and adversely affect the administration of his departments, but also because thereby we place the prestige of the highest amongst us in the hands of any busybody or unscrupulous persons.

I understand that Shri Jain had been represented to you as a respectable and reliable man. The enquiries I made showed that Shri Jain is a person of unsatisfactory antecedents and our approach to his allegations should have been one of extreme caution and circumspection. The setting of an investigation machinery in motion is, of course, easy, but the mere case of the step makes it incumbent on us that it is set in motion only when the information is *prima facie* credible and the antecedents of the informant are above taint or suspicion, particularly when the question involves the honour and prestige of a well-placed person.

I asked Gopichand to let me know what the position in regard to such contracts was and whether Seth Sudarshan had anything to do with such matters. I send herewith Dr. Gopichand's letter and its accompaniments, which speak for themselves. You will notice that the whole thing is dealt with by another Minister and that Seth Sudarshan's views on such contracts are quite inconsistent with the complaint made by Shri Jain. I am wondering whether in these circumstances you would like to consider the prosecution of Shri Jain for giving false information. I would rather that this were done to set an example to public dangers of his type.

I should be glad if you would kindly return the enclosures.

Yours,
Vallabhbhai Patel.

The Hon'ble Shri Jawaharlal Nehru
Prime Minister
New Delhi

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New Delhi
13 December 1950

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I read with some surprise and distress your letter of 11 December. What distressed me particularly was that you should worry about this matter and write to me on the eve of your departure to Bombay.

I do not think you have got the facts quite correctly about my connection with this affair. So far as I know, the facts are as follows:

One day, as I was going to office early in the morning, a man came to see me. I was in a hurry and I spoke to him for a few minutes. I did not know him, nor had anybody recommended

him to me. He told me a story which chiefly concerned Sudarshan. Dr. Gopichand's name was not directly concerned, but was rather casually mentioned. I had neither the time nor the inclination to listen to his story. But it is a normal practice with me that when any particular allegation is made I send it to the proper man to enquire into it. I told this man, whose name I found was Dhankumar Jain, to see Handoo and tell him whatever he had to say. Handoo saw him and reported to me about the story. Thereupon I told Handoo to go to H.V.R. Iengar.

I took no further steps in this matter and quite forgot about it. H.V.R. Iengar mentioned it to me some days later and there the matter ended. As I have said above, Dr. Gopichand's name came into this story indirectly and incidentally. It was really Sudarshan who was concerned. I could say nothing about Sudarshan, but when a specific charge is made I thought it was for the Home Ministry to find out if it was worth enquiry or not. Sudarshan's reputation, so both Handoo and H.V.R. Iengar told me, was not good. Indeed for several years past, I have heard complaints against Sudarshan. I remember Bapu [Mahatma Gandhi] getting such complaints and enquiring about them. But quite apart from this previous impression, I thought the best thing was for the Home Ministry to go into it and I had nothing further to do with it. I think that if there was any substance in the matter you would no doubt be informed, as I expected to be informed myself. It did not strike me at all that I should worry you about such a preliminary stage of an allegation. I never attached the least value to any charges against Dr. Gopichand, and indeed no charges were made to me about him.

I have repeatedly had Members of Parliament coming to me and complaining of corruption, etc. I have always told them that I am prepared to enquire into any allegation provided it is specific and has some *prima facie* basis for it. Whenever any such story comes to me, I refer it immediately to the Ministry concerned. The investigation machinery should only be started if some preliminary proof is obtained. I have felt that no charge or allegation, whoever might be concerned, should go unheeded. This is most unfair to the person whose name is dragged in. Whispers go round and it is said that Government is afraid of taking action.

As I have said above, I knew nothing about Dhankumar Jain and nobody had represented him to me as a respected and reliable man. Indeed, nobody wrote or spoke to me about him. I have not seen him *since*.

You ask me whether it would be desirable to consider the prosecution of Dhankumar Jain for giving false information. Wherever there is adequate proof, this procedure should normally be adopted. I rather doubt if there is much to get a grip on [in] this matter.

I am returning the papers you sent me.

Yours,
Jawaharlal

The Hon'ble Sardar Vallabhhhai Patel
Bombay

EPILOGUE

With this, the tenth volume, my principal collaborators and aides and I have completed the arduous task we humbly began in April 1970. It was to process and edit the voluminous correspondence of Sardar Patel covering the period 1 October 1945 to 13 December 1950. He died in Bombay on 15 December 1950.

We are gratified that the task of editing this valuable source material of contemporary Indian history has been completed within the deadline we had fixed.

The Forewords to Volumes I and X have explained at some length the technique we had adopted in handling the correspondence. Forewords to the other volumes were brief. We had decided not to comment on the material, as we did not consider it appropriate to come between the reader and the correspondence. We feel we have observed this self-imposed restraint.

We have helped the reader, however, with footnotes identifying personalities and institutions, with appendices and pictures relevant to the theme of each volume and with introductions giving flashes, in the manner of a series of snapshots. We included in every volume highlights of all the volumes so that the reader may know the various themes of the correspondence. We have used the opportunity provided by the conclusion of our task to give the most significant highlights of the entire ten volumes to help the reader link up the various threads of the narrative.

We have expanded the feature "Focus on Sardar" which appeared in Volume I with the impressions of Maniben Patel, who was her father's personal aide, and of five top-ranking ICS officers who worked with him and could throw light on his style of work. We omitted from Volumes II to IX the views of these officers but carried that of Maniben Patel. Since the first volume dealt only with Kashmir, and the remaining nine have dealt chronologically and thematically with numerous political and administrative issues, we have decided to repeat "Focus" in the last volume and expand it by including the views of a journalist and three men from public life who have held high position in their respective spheres and who had an opportunity of seeing the Sardar in action in the crucial years covered by the correspondence.

Broadly, the basic character of the ten volumes may be summed up thus: (1) The correspondence covers only five and a quarter years of Vallabhbhai Patel's life (1 October 1945 to 13 December 1950). It thus constitutes only a fragment of his 75-year life span. Even though this period was very crucial in India's history, and in a sense marked the climax of his public life, the image that emerges has to be judged against the background of only a segment of his life and not as a presentation of his total personality.

(2) The correspondence helps to throw light on some dark corners of Indian history and should enable the research scholar and the average reader to learn and form his opinion on a period of epic interest. We expect the correspondence will provoke some and inspire others to publish further material which will help to fill gaps and throw fresh light on the controversial events and decisions of the period.

(3) The burden of organizing the general election of 1945-46 was mainly borne by Sardar Patel. When the Interim Government was formed on 3 September 1946 Sardar Patel soon sensed that the modicum of goodwill to work it was lacking among Britons and that when the Muslim League joined it, Lord Wavell and his advisers tilted heavily towards the League bloc in the Cabinet, thus making partition unavoidable.

(4) The correspondence could make some readers revise their ideas on the Sardar's attitude to rehabilitation of Hindu and Sikh refugees from Pakistan and about Muslims who migrated to Pakistan and those that remained in India.

(5) The general impression that the problem of Kashmir was entirely the concern of Jawaharlal Nehru will be dispelled by the elaborate correspondence revealing the part played by Sardar Patel in facilitating the implementation of the basic policy the Prime Minister pursued.

(6) The functioning of the Congress High Command in the political and administrative spheres is clearly brought out. If the Prime Minister was responsive to the people's urges and impulses, the Sardar held that "it is easier to steady public opinion after a jolt than to steady the administrative machinery after demoralization has set in."

(7) The Sardar's image as the Iron Man of the Government emerges from his firmness in maintaining political discipline as shown by the manner in which he pulled up a Premier of the stature of Dr. B. C. Roy. He applied a strict yardstick in giving

tickets to party candidates, and while avoiding washing political dirty linen in public, he favoured a probe into scandals like that over molasses in Bihar. This house-keeping by a disciplinarian kept most Premiers, Ministers and legislators on the alert. The Sardar's writ ran throughout the country because he inculcated respect for the office of Prime Minister, for the judiciary, for the Constitution and the law of the land both by precept and practice.

(8) The correspondence shows an amazing similarity between the problems faced then and those stalking the land today, whether of inflation, shortages of commodities, labour troubles, stagnation in investment, unemployment, communal tensions, regional pulls, general lawlessness, widespread corruption and mounting scandals. Thus the stage would appear to be much the same except that it is no longer bestrode by the colossi of the past.

(9) The correspondence reveals acute controversies and divergence of views among top leaders, for instance, over the election of Rajen Babu as President of the Republic and of Purushottam Das Tandon as President of the Congress. There were also differences in approach to economic issues and over China and Tibet as well as the reaction to the heavy influx of refugees from East Pakistan. But they were resolved because both Nehru and Patel were complementary characters and considered themselves inseparable for the stability of the regime and the resolution of the many crises which beset the young republic.

(10) Sardar Patel did not write the chaste prose which made Jawaharlal's letters scintillating. But the Sardar's letters, even when drafted by his aides, had the imprint of his mind. They had brevity, clarity and firmness of purpose. Once, when Nehru assumed that a particular letter might not have been read by the Sardar, the latter wrote back: "If, after having known me for so many years, any of my colleagues still feel that I can be led, misled or ignored by my officers, I can only blame myself for having impressed them so poorly."

My colleagues and I hope the great service rendered by Maniben Patel in preserving this correspondence, and by the Navajivan Trust in publishing it in a style worthy of the Sardar and of its theme will enrich the annals of our history and the minds and experience of the present and succeeding generations.

2 Tolstoy Lane
New Delhi 110001
7 April 1974

Durga Das

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Soon after publication of my memoirs—India from Curzon to Nehru and After—I was approached by the Trustees of the Navajivan Trust of Ahmedabad to edit Sardar Patel's voluminous correspondence. Having just entered seventies (and having had a heart attack in the opening year of sixties) I was hesitant to undertake the arduous task. I agreed to the proposal, however, from a sense of patriotic duty armed with the assurance of collaboration from friends and colleagues whose help and counsel would be needed to process this vast accumulation of material with professional skill, arrange it thematically and make it meaningful to the average reader.

I gladly discharge the pleasant duty of recording the thanks I owe to those without whose dedicated co-operation the labour of love I undertook could not have been completed in record time. The help of principal collaborators was made all the more exhilarating in that it concerned the correspondence of one whom they had closely watched and admired as the architect of the Indian Union and one of the builders of the nation.

The unexpected death of B. L. Sharma on 3 November 1972 deprived us of his wise counsel. Fortunately, the task of editing had been completed just before his death. In a letter dated 14 October 1972 the Managing Trustee, Mr. Shantilal Shah, wrote to me: "I am glad that the colossal task of Sardar Patel's correspondence has been completed by you and will be a part of the history of India."

In his note of 12 October 1972 B. L. Sharma wrote his own assessment which included the following: (a) the Sardar's attitude to labour has still some relevance today; (b) the correspondence shows his insistence on treating services with fairness and justice; (c) in spite of occasional rasping correspondence between Nehru and the Sardar, persistent consultations between the two and their inter-dependence and mutual trust and confidence are well brought out.

Another tragedy occurred when sudden death took away a most dedicated collaborator, Uggar Sain, on 8 October 1973, at the young age of 56. He suffered cerebral haemorrhage on 7

October and died in Willingdon Hospital, New Delhi, 28 hours after the stroke.

Uggar Sain bore the main brunt of processing and arranging the material thematically for the various volumes, and of sub-editing it. He read proofs for print order until a day before his death. Since Uggar Sain was my son-in-law the shock became unbearable, but my other colleagues rallied to help me complete the colossal task we had undertaken.

No less important in making the correspondence intelligible to contemporaries and to future generations was the task of processing the avalanche of correspondence and to preparing footnotes, glossary, abbreviation and appendices. We were helped in this by the zealous work of Dr. Shri Ram Sharma of the University of Gwalior, of Mr. Nizami, a research aide, and Mr. Harbanslal Muggu, a veteran lawyer. Finally, the trio that made the task of keeping to the deadline manageable by prompt and accurate typewriting were N. K. Raj, P. Kapur and M. Chandrasekharan of INFA.

Two others deserve thanks, the artist S. D. Beri, who designed the jacket with variations for each volume, and the special correspondent of INFA, B. K. Mathur, who helped to select and procure, mostly from the Press Information Bureau, the pictures which adorn every volume and lend it visual significance. We also thank the staff of the Navajivan Trust whose labours have helped to bring this massive undertaking of publishing ten volumes covering over 6,000 pages to a successful close.

Finally, a word of appreciation about India News And Feature Alliance of Parliament Street, New Delhi. It would not have been possible to complete the task by the deadline we had fixed had not INFA ungrudgingly rendered the help of its staff and resources beyond the limit it had undertaken.

Durga Das

APPENDIX

SARDAR PATEL MEMORIAL LECTURES DELIVERED BY DURGA DAS
UNDER THE JOINT AUSPICES OF THE SARDAR PATEL UNIVERSITY & THE GUJARAT UNIVERSITY AT THE H. K. ARTS
COLLEGE HALL, AHMEDABAD AT 6 P.M. ON
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SARDAR PATEL—THE POLITICIAN

A newspaper-man's craft teaches him to dramatise his story in a headline and give the gist of the event in the introductory paragraph. To do the same thing here, I should make one thing very clear at the outset.

The two lectures which I have been called upon to deliver at this famous university in the midst of a galaxy of scholars concern a person whom I have come to consider the model man—meaning the model citizen, the model politician and the model statesman.

Fifty-four years of intense journalistic work in India have made me come to three broad conclusions about the leaders who have shaped the destiny of this country during the period:

1. Gandhi and Vallabhbhai Patel carved out destiny for themselves. Jawaharlal Nehru was the child of destiny; Lalbahadur Shastri was thrown up by destiny; Indira Gandhi is the instrument of destiny.

2. Gandhi lit the torch of revolution, Jawaharlal was his torch-bearer, Vallabhbhai provided the fuel to the torch. Gandhi had the power to hypnotise; Jawaharlal had charm and Patel reduced everything into a system. Thus did the triumvirate play its part collectively in the advent of Swaraj.

3. Vallabhbhai Patel integrated India and consolidated its administration, putting democracy on the rails. Jawaharlal Nehru provided the ideological thrust that projected India's image abroad as a moral force and created confidence among the minorities at home.

The inevitable conclusion is that history will not permit omission of or underplaying of the role of any one of the triumvirate. I had conclusive evidence of this on the 96th birthday of Sardar Patel as celebrated in the Union Capital on October 31. With the passage of time, the Sardar's image keeps on growing to the manner it kept on growing from the day he joined the freedom struggle in 1917 until his death on December 15, 1950.

It will be for this select audience and the larger one that may read the address to evaluate the humble attempt I am making to sustain this headline and the intro to my story of the life of the Sardar.

Perhaps, I am a little too obsessed with a journalistic yardstick; but I may mention what my guru taught me when I was confirmed in the profession in 1919. He told me that a newspaper-man must never be or attempt to be a scholar. He must write in a style that would be understood by the meanest intelligence. He spelled out this as equivalent to the intelligence of an average matriculate in English. Further, a journalist should have the mental discipline of putting the maximum volume of ideas in a minimum number of words and also the resilience of putting minimum ideas in maximum words. In the clichés of the time, such a writer was known as penny-a-liner.

Although we journalists consider Narada, our patron-saint, the ideal journalist of our time was Mahatma Gandhi, the Editor of Young India and later, of Harijan. But if his style of writing provided a model, the rapport between journalists and Sardar Patel was the model of how politicians and reporters should communicate in the best tradition of their respective professions.

Lives of great men teach us—you all, I suppose, know the poem. The subject of my lecture is a great man and I want to share with you my thoughts on what his life teaches us. I confess that my own experiment with the inspiration I got from the poem was not very rewarding. As I entered the profession of journalism, I studied the series printed by G. A. Natesan on Nation Builders. I found the narrative interesting but felt little inspiration. Perhaps, my sensibilities were dull; perhaps the narrative failed to communicate; perhaps the stories were couched in a language that made the ideals attributed to them look unattainable.

I was thinking of the effect on my mind of the lives of men then alive and who belonged to the era in which I was born and grew. It was so different from the impact made on my innocent mind by the other great men and women of whom I had heard all throughout my childhood and adolescence.

I may recall the impact of those names. I would say that I believed that Krishna was the ideal companion for every woman, Sita and Savitri the ideal wife, Rama the ideal son, Lakshman the ideal brother, Nanak the ideal Guru, Arjuna the ideal warrior and Birbal the ideal counsellor.

All this was, of course, the impact of the environment in which I was brought up. One's childhood and youth leave imperishable impressions which make what is called one's psyche and build one's ethos.

Next comes the search for one's identity and the development of personality. Here again environment plays a dominant part. You are born into a household as the result of your karma, you bring with you your share of luck or ill luck; you can by your actions make or mar your destiny. Such things you hear casually in talks among elders, more often the women of the family or of the neighbourhood as they discuss births and deaths, marriages and miscarriages. A new child may bring luck, so also a spouse, or may be sometimes they do the opposite.

scheming and crafty in another. Politics is described as the science and art of government and when you ask 'What are his politics?' or say 'this is not politics,' the word assumes a very different connotation.

A politician is defined simply as one skilled in politics. In this sense, the term has also been defined as meaning a statesman. Perhaps, the more popular definition is 'one interested or engaged in politics especially as a profession' and 'one who makes a trade of politics.' Johnson's famous indictment of patriotism as the last refuge of—perhaps represents the general view of those disgusted with politicians or who take a cynical view of politics itself.

I would urge you to consider politics an honourable profession and a politician the indispensable political animal in a democratic society. The question that should concern us really is how to train this animal and it is in this role that the Sardar emerges as the master trainer.

Indeed, if I may take the liberty of beating a drum, not my own, but the one entrusted to my care, I can make bold to say that Sardar Patel's correspondence from 1 October 1945 to 12 December 1950 published by the Navajivan Trust in ten volumes of which I have the honour of being the editor, should be prescribed as the primer for all who adopt the profession of politics. We hear quite a lot these days of the need for a cadre of trained and dedicated workers of political parties. They will have in Sardar Patel's correspondence the gold mine that will help make themselves a genuine coin.

Perhaps, I may add a word about what makes a statesman so that you may have a perview of the keynote to the lecture scheduled for tomorrow. A statesman is described in academic parlance as a person taking a prominent part, or skilled, in the management of state affairs, a sagacious far-sighted practical politician.

Then for the purpose of drawing a line let me present the Sardar the politician as a person engaged in the profession of politics and the Sardar in the role of a statesman as one skilled in management of state affairs—a sagacious far-sighted politician.

It is generally asked as to why in the past 25 years the Sardar has not figured in popular adoration or in official celebrations as well and as often as the other two of the triumvirate.

Here again, I will take you back to the Indian psyche. We worship or revere or salute an uncommon man. Gandhi became an uncommon man when he wore the garb of a saint and became a Mahatma in word and deed. Nehru was sold to the people by Gandhi as a Prince who had put on the garb of a sadhu. Sardar Patel represented the common man who had wholeheartedly dedicated himself to the service of the Mahatma and had become one with the Master in thought and deed.

A common man worships the uncommon man, be he a king, a Mahatma, a merchant prince or a fabulously rich lawyer. Gandhi and Nehru were uncommon men while Vallabhbhai Patel came on to the scene as a common man.

Let me administer a mild shock to you. I do not believe any one can be a statesman unless he has been a successful politician. In sense, it is like asserting that a good householder must first be a good brahmachari and that a sanyasi or a monk must first be a good householder.

The profession of politics is, I believe, the most honourable and the most exacting, and it can also be the most debasing. But one cannot be a statesman if he leaves any chink in his armour, while he practises politics. Why do we call a sanyasi a man of God? Because he detaches himself from his family, his clan and from his attachment to worldly goods and temptations. Thus shorn of obligations he becomes clear-sighted and uses the wisdom acquired as a householder.

Sardar Patel, the politician, was the sum total of the experience he had acquired since childhood and the way he carved out destiny for himself. This acquisition was not the result of ambition, but of the never-ending search for self-improvement and self-fulfilment.

The Sardar was born on October 31, 1875 at Nadiad not far from Ahmedabad in a family of Patidar Patels, a hardy people, good both as warriors and as peasants. The family had plenty to eat and milk to drink. The mother was an expert spinner which helped to clothe her children. She would sing devotional songs to children and tell stories from Ramayana and Mahabharata.

Vallabhbhai was the fourth in the family of five brothers and a sister. In those days children went to school when they were about to enter their teens. No wonder the Sardar matriculated at 22. He had married at 18. But in this respect he was luckier than his brother who was wedded at the age of 9.

Anyway, the innate tendency of this man to resist injustice and to debunk the proud is exemplified by three incidents. A teacher who unjustly caned a student had to apologise when Vallabhbhai led the fellow students in a strike. Another teacher who ran a racket by overcharging prices for books and stationery, was brought to his senses by a successful boycott. A poor teacher who had the audacity to stand for election to a seat in the Nadiad Municipality was told by his rich opponent, a very respectable Patidar, either to withdraw or agree to a wager that the loser would have his moustache shaved off—the worst disgrace in the social mores of those days. When Vallabhbhai heard of the wager he organized the students (his monkey brigade) and made the bania lose the poll and publicly suffer the disgrace.

(A) For want of money, the Sardar had to forego college education. He studied privately and had to borrow books from others to prepare himself for and pass the District Pleaders' Examination. He started practice at Godhra but soon shifted to Borsad where he made a name on the criminal side. Perhaps nothing brings out the stern character of the man as well as the manner in which he received the news of the death of his wife while he was arguing a case. He overcame his emotion and kept on pleading. That he did not remarry was a further proof of the values he cherished.

The reason that prompted him to take to bar was that in all important cases clients preferred to engage barristers in addition to a local lawyer, however eminent and competent the latter might be. They were paid larger fees. Vallabhbhai felt it humiliating to sit in court as assistant to those whom he knew as generally of inferior calibre. Self respect more than money was the predominant factor, in making him apply for admission to the course in England.

His brother Vithalbhai claimed preference as the elder one and took the course instead. Vallabhbhai not only surrendered his right but looked after the brother's family. When his turn came he did his course in the fashion of the rugged but determined peasant. He would walk long distance to the library to read law books and walk back home thus saving bus fare and maintaining his health as well. He fell ill and the British doctor wanted to amputate his leg, but a German doctor cured him with an operation which the Sardar underwent without chloroform. The Sardar not only finished his study in six instead of 12 terms but stood first and won a prize of £ 50.

It was in 1921 that I first met Sardar Patel in his capacity as Chairman of the Reception Committee of the 37th session of the Indian National Congress. I found a complete break with the past in the way the pandal and the Congress Nagar had been organized, and the session was conducted in the most orderly and disciplined way. It was there that I learned how Sardar Patel had joined Gandhiji in 1917 and had organized the municipal election in Ahmedabad so well that the Congress party captured almost all the elected seats. The Sardar as President of the Municipal Board got the ICS Commissioner changed and thus pulled the prestige of the steel frame down a peg or two. Since I had heard stories of how the Nehrus had made a bonfire of their foreign-made apparel it was a surprise to me that similar publicity had not been given to the fact that the Sardar too had been fastidious about European dress and used to get his stiff collars laundered in Bombay. What is more, he was daily at the club playing bridge—a hall mark then of Westernisation. When he joined Gandhi he burnt all his foreign clothes, socks and hats and from then on wore dhoti, kurta and a chaddar, adding a warm jacket in winter. It was the garb of the common man.

But what brought him to the *pinnacle of political glory* was the grooming he received while managing municipal affairs, fighting floods, drought and epidemics, leading a no-tax campaign in Kaira, flag satyagraha campaign in Nagpur, raising Rs. 10 lakhs for Talak Swarajya Fund, enrolling 3 lakh members of the Congress party in Gujarat, building a big hospital in Ahmedabad on the grounds of the Congress session and helping mill-workers to have a fair deal from the mill-owners.

After Nagpur Satyagraha the Sardar successfully conducted Borsad Satyagraha in the first week of December 1923. It lasted five weeks. It was as a protest against the punitive tax imposed on the people above 16 including women to meet the cost of the additional police posted in the Taluka to catch hold of a dacoit. A secret document came to Sardar's hands which proved that the Government had supplied a rifle and bullets to one dacoit to help him to catch another dacoit. It was a thrilling fight, as thrilling as the later Bardoli Satyagraha, though of short duration. But it inspired both masses and workers beyond measure. (Ravishanker Mahara) thereafter devoted a better part of his life in the service of the so-called criminal tribes of the Kheda Dist. In 1930 was opened a school for their children and only recently a girls school too has been started. But the seeds for such work were sown during that period.)

It was only a person seasoned in the field of battle for political rights and fairplay for the underdog who could be counted on to implement what then seemed a utopian programme of paralysing the all-powerful British Government through non-violent non-co-operation. What Sardar Patel did at Bardoli is written imperishably in the chronicle of the freedom struggle of India. It was he who made Gandhi's formula viable and sold it to the nation. Mahatma Gandhi knew from then on that Vallabhbhai was the Sardar of his non-violent army, the military genius who could win a battle without firing a shot or shedding a drop of blood.

Even though political reward for such outstanding performance was deferred, I can vouch as a journalist that after Bardoli none stood higher than the Sardar in the Gandhian echelon. Jawaharlal Nehru was of course, outside the Gandhian entourage even though he was totally loyal to the master, the revolutionary Gandhi.

It was Pandit Motilal Nehru who moved from the chair the resolution on the Sardar's achievement at Bardoli for which he deserved the Congress crown. He described Vallabhbhai as the "matchless general" and his followers as the "Balaclava battalion of Bardoli" at the Congress session in Calcutta in 1928.

Perhaps the most typical expression of the Sardar's political philosophy was given when he spoke thus to the Kathiawar Political Conference in 1929: 'You hope for much from me because a short while ago I was able

to do something in Bardoli which you found inspiring and worth while. May I be frank? I live in British India where restrictions of speech are fewer than in Kathiawar, but I do not like making public speeches; indeed I believe too much talking does more harm than good. I must tell you what is your principal defect; this I could do much better if I had the sweetness of tongue which you have. But I am a peasant, and have been accustomed to speak bluntly. I must therefore ask you to learn to distinguish between politeness and flattery. You will see I am neither old nor young but have reached a stage where young and old age meet. I derive inspiration and enthusiasm from the young which I try to moderate by the experience of age. Wherever I go in India, I hear cries of revolution, but nowhere revolution is achieved by mere shouting, however loud. Remember it is the silent worker who achieved revolutions. I keep Gandhiji away from my work. We are not likely to develop a capacity for initiative and independent action, if we always look to him for guidance. Our chief defect is lack of discipline and organization. We do not know how to be soldiers. In this age of individual independence, we have mistaken licence for liberty.'

The Sardar now moved about the country and presided over Political Conferences in Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra and toured Karnataka and Bihar. He presided over the Karachi session of the Congress in 1931 which set a new pattern of holding session in open stadium and drew up the charter of Fundamental Rights later embodied in the Union Constitution and now the subject of heated argument before the Supreme Court about their sanctity.

Gandhi with whom the sardar shared life in jail had this to say: 'One of the greatest joys of my life was that I had an opportunity of staying in prison with the Sardar. I knew of his invincible courage and of his burning love for our country but never before had I had good fortune to spend so much time with him as I was able to do during these sixteen months. His affection and love overwhelmed me and reminded me of my dear mother. I would never have imagined, that he possessed such qualities and maternal affection.'

When Gandhi withdrew from the Congress and took leave from its emotion-charged session in Bombay in 1934 Congressmen felt a sense of security in that Gandhi had bequeathed to them the Sardar, his general and Jawaharlal his torch-bearer. The Congress having decided to contest elections Sardar Patel was entrusted with the task of organizing the campaign.

His genius for sizing up individuals, his extraordinary ability to raise funds and put the recalcitrants in their place, was rewarded with resounding electoral successes. I will quote here what Maniben Patel has stated from her personal knowledge:

"The Sardar became the party boss from the time he became head of the Parliamentary Board. He was also the party's main fund-raiser. The Congress High Command, of which he was the mainspring, functioned as a moral

prop for the Chief Ministers against the administrative machine directed by the British.

"I used to sleep by the telephone to take calls that came at odd hours of the night so that the Sardar's sleep was not disturbed. I took down messages and passed them on to him the next morning. One such call came at midnight from Biswanath Das, then Premier of Orissa. He had decided to resign over the choice of a provincial official to act as Governor. The Sardar backed him and Viceroy yielded.

"I may recall a meeting the Sardar had with Bombay Governor Lumley in 1937 at Lumley's request. It lasted about an hour. Lumley told the Sardar that he would be Premier of Bombay, but the lands confiscated from the peasants of Bardoli would never be returned. The Sardar replied: 'Note it down that I am not going to be Premier and also that the lands will be returned to the peasants.'

"The Sardar took many unpopular decisions in party and Government matters, but his decisions were accepted because he had no axe to grind. He was not amenable to threats or blackmail. He had no property of his own and he was above extraneous considerations. He had nothing to lose, had no ambition and no desire to cling to office." Here the quotation from Maniben ends.

The master with the cane hanging on the wall was Sardar Patel and all Congress Premiers and their colleagues and supporters knew it. What however, was not known so widely was the emotional strain under which the Iron Man forced himself to enforce discipline. A glimpse of this inner turmoil is provided by what he once wrote as "A Word to Congressmen." This document in its own way may be regarded as his will and testament in the sphere of institutional discipline. He said: "For long years I have worked as a soldier of the Congress. I still consider myself a soldier though many call me a Sardar. To my fellow soldiers I respectfully submit that our only claim to power and authority springs from our having followed Mahatma Gandhi in the fight for India's freedom. Any further and future claim or honour that we find shall also be through sacrifice for the poor and the downtrodden. Humility is a Congressman's first requisite because that is the badge of service. Our proper place is not at vantage points of power but at vantage points of service. Who shall be ministers, and where shall state capitals and other things be located are matters for small people to talk and write about. Congressmen will be forced and pushed into seats of power if they are true Congressmen.

"For years I never spoke from a Congress platform. Even now I fear to make a speech, lest some unguarded word of mine should hurt somebody's feelings or interests. It would be unbefitting a servant. A soldier keeps his feet firmly on the soil. He is not afraid to fall. But those who have risen high risk a fall if they are not careful. Hence those in position of authority should

be watchful day and night. Let Congressmen eschew desire for power. Let able workers be brought forward. If it becomes necessary for us to sit in seats of authority let our hands be clean, our tongues mild, our hearts sound and our vision clear."

It has been my long-standing belief that the true grandeur of Patel's personality will never be known fully unless it is understood with what feeling he led many of his near and dear brothers in arms throughout the ordeal of fire outwardly without the slightest hint of vacillation. Perhaps his outlook on the life of a man with a mission is best illustrated by what Mr. Rasiklal Parikh, now a member of the Lok Sabha, told me not long ago. He said:

"I had joined the 1930 struggle and was continuously in active life except for small periods when I went to the university for completing my studies. In August 1937, I had returned to India after completing my degree course at London University. I was to go back to London in 1938 for my final law examination. Just at that time the struggle for responsible government started in Rajkot State. Dhebarbhai and his colleagues were arrested and sent to jail. After a protest meeting in Jinnah Hall in Bombay against the Rajkot State's repression the Sardar sent for me and asked if I would agree to go to Rajkot and be in charge of the conduct of the struggle. This meant that I was to give up my study of law in England. I told him that whatever he asked me to do I would do. On his instructions, I went to Rajkot. There at the end of the day's programme of direct action I used to ring him up every evening and give him the account of the events and outline of next day's programme. He never questioned our action at any time on any score and I was surprised to see that the Sardar whose name inspired fear was so trusting. He did not interfere with our initiative. His response or reaction on phone always was "Han Thik Hai" (it is all right).

"In 1945, I was thinking of doing some income-earning work so that I was less of a burdon to my elder brother who was bearing the financial brunt of my living and public activities. I mentioned this to Dhebarbhai who very astutely suggested that that would amount to my withdrawing partly from public life, and that I should mention this to the Sardar and should not do it without seeking his blessings. Dhebarbhai and I went to Bombay to meet Sardar Saheb. When I mentioned to him my intention of joining some business and I would, therefore, be doing only part time work in the organisation, he kept quiet. When I told him that I had come to him for his consent, he said: 'Look Rasiklal, when you first joined the struggle I had felt happy that there has been one addition to our army of fakirs. The fakirs feel happy when some one joins them as a fakir, but it is not the custom of a fakir to agree to a fakir leaving the order. So if you want to go, you may go; there is never a question of my consent'. On the spur of the moment and touched by his sentiments

I said: 'I won't go if I have not your blessings', and my break from active political struggle was just thwarted."

The Maharaja of Bhavnagar who was made the Governor of Madras used to tell me that whenever he had the occasion of meeting Sardar Patel he always felt he met his own father—that was the feeling the Sardar inspired in him. I think that was the experience of many persons who came in touch with him as a leader. His approach was to pat the small worker on his back for the sincere work he did.

The Second World War broke out and with it came the withdrawal of the Congress party from political offices. Replying to a speech by Sir Samuel Hoare, then Secretary of State for Dominions, who had asked in the House of Commons whether India was fit for independence, the Sardar stated at a public meeting in Ahmedabad: "If you lose the war, you will have lost everything, and even if you win, you will have suffered so heavily that your victory will be an empty one. At the end of the war, I declare no nation will remain subject to another. A great revolution is going to sweep the people everywhere. We shall see a new world emerge out of the fiery ordeal of this war." Could any crystal gazer have spoken more prophetically?

Back in the firing line the Sardar was arrested under the Defence of India Act in November 1940 for participating in satyagraha launched by Gandhi to press Britain for firm commitment on Indian independence. He was imprisoned and sent to Yaryada. Released on 20 August 1941 for ill health, he participated in the unfruitful talks in New Delhi on Cripps' proposals for a solution of the political deadlock. The inevitable struggle followed. But this was to be the final confrontation symbolised by the Quit India resolution passed by the AICC in Bombay and the arrest on 9 August 1942 of Gandhi and the members of the Congress Working Committee. The "do or die" slogan lit afresh the fire of revolt with the result that the new Viceroy, Lord Wavell, released the nation's leaders and called them to a conference in Simla in June 1945. Although the Conference was sabotaged by Jinnah in collusion with Lord Wavell's ICS advisers, the Viceroy decided with the consent of the parties concerned to order a fresh election in the winter of 1945-46.

It was a momentous election which ultimately sealed the fate of India and led to the partition of the country. This election was undertaken under the orders of the British Government of the day. On 8 May 1945 the Second World War in Europe ended officially. Immediately, the Labour Party in England demanded the end of the Coalition Ministry headed by Winston Churchill. In July, a General Election was held in which the Labour Party came out victorious and a Labour Government was formed with Clement Attlee as Prime Minister. It gave the first priority to Indian affairs and came to a decision that a General Election must be held immediately in India

with a view to ascertaining Indian opinion on the future constitution of India. The new Central Assembly which was to come into existence as a result of the election was also to function as a constitution-making body.

When the question of leadership of the election campaign came for consideration, opinion within the Congress was unanimous that it was Sardar Patel who must be chosen as the Chairman of the Congress Election Board. The letter of 1 October 1945, which was addressed by Sardar Patel to Pandit Nehru asked the latter to draw up the Congress Election Manifesto. The advice given to Nehru in the letter was that the manifesto should be on the basis of "Independence or Quit India." The next task was to raise funds for election expenses and selection of the Congress candidates. The task of selecting candidates was undertaken by Sardar Patel and Maulana Azad, the President of the Congress jointly whereas that of raising funds was left to Sardar Patel. Jawaharlal Nehru kept himself aloof from the organisational part of the election campaign. His task was to address mass meetings in various parts of the country.

There was a mad race for power everywhere and for this end there was no hesitation in resorting to character-assassination of the opponents. There was sharp exchange of views between Patel and Azad on the selection of some candidates. Nevertheless, they managed to preserve their image of single-minded unity.

V. Shankar who was Sardar Patel's Secretary during the period the Sardar held ministerial office has written in the souvenir released by the Citizens Council of Delhi on 31 October last that during the last phase of the functioning of the triumvirate—Gandhi, Nehru and Patel—"the dominating figure was that of the Sardar."

At last when the stage was set for either the transfer of power or a final showdown, I knew from my contacts with the high-ups in New Delhi that none caused greater perturbation in the minds of Britons and their stooges in British India and in the Indian States than the Iron Man. They had developed respect and even awe for the Sardar as a politician. Standing at the crossroad of history they asked themselves and their coterie: What will the Sardar want? What will he do?

I can vouch from my knowledge as a journalist that the Sardar was largely responsible for making the Congress Working Committee accept the Cabinet Mission plan to gain strategic advantage by holding the reins of power and that he plumped for Dominion Status to gain a firm foothold for the ultimate attainment of purna swaraj. It was in the three months preceding the transfer of power that history was made and it was the Sardar's courage, clarity of mind and conviction that largely helped to pull off the deal that led to the transfer of power on 15 August 1947.

SARDAR PATEL—THE STATESMAN

The purpose of yesterday's memorial lecture was to describe Sardar Patel the politician. The narrative ended with the transfer of power and the emergence of an independent India with a Government of which Jawaharlal Nehru was the Prime Minister and Sardar Patel Deputy Prime Minister. Mahatma Gandhi suffering from the agony of partition and of blood-letting that preceded and followed it, was not present in New Delhi to hear Jawaharlal Nehru's 'trust with destiny' oration at the zero hour on the midnight of 14/15 August 1947.

But Gandhi, Nehru and Patel are three names inextricably woven into the pattern of Indian history in the great and thrilling years leading up to independence and immediately after. Vallabhbhai, unlike Gandhi and Nehru, was born poor. He was of peasant stock. His early life was a struggle to get educated. A man who matriculated at 22, an age at which other young Indians complete their university studies, and who through laborious self-teaching qualified as a district pleader, should have normally remained in this station for the rest of his working life. But Vallabhbhai, like his brilliant elder brother Vithalbhai, was not to be satisfied with a pedestrian part in the life of a small town. He thought big. His mind was fired by the desire to develop his latent talents to their full capacity.

The civil disobedience campaign in Bardoli in 1927 was the turning-point in Patel's political career. It projected him on the national scene as a man of action, clear headed and firm of purpose and a trusted lieutenant of Gandhi. The British Raj capitulated in the face of the struggle led by Vallabhbhai and the satyagraha was called off.

This same capacity for effective leadership revealed itself throughout Vallabhbhai's career of public service spread over four decades. Whether he was arranging relief for victims of flood or pestilence or communal violence, or fighting arrogant and overweening British bureaucrats for civic rights or against unjust land taxes, or marshalling support for mass satyagraha or for Congress candidates in local, provincial or national elections, he showed the same initiative and organisational ability he had successfully displayed as a rebellious school boy.

Freedom brought with it new problems. Popularly-elected ministers had to be schooled in their new functions. Bureaucrats had to learn that they no longer served a foreign master but the people of India. The feudal rule of Princely India had to be changed to mesh with the needs of a democratic structure responsive to the wishes of the people.

The Sardar acted in four spheres as the conscience of the Congress party. One related to the conduct of elections to the Central and provincial legislatures and the Constituent Assembly, including the selection of candidates for the party ticket and the collection and distribution of funds to finance the

electoral battle; the second concerned the integration of Princely states into the Indian Union and their democratisation; the third was about supervision of provincial ministries manned by Congressmen and control of the administrative machine especially relating to law and order, and the fourth pertained to the shaping of the Constitution, especially the chapters on Fundamental Rights and safeguards for the Princes, the Civil Service and the minorities.

The Sardar gained reputation as an Iron Man because of the manner in which he, as custodian of free India's Home Affairs, brought about and maintained internal stability in the wake of the holocaust that preceded and followed the country's blood-drenched partition. His genius for organisation found full scope in the task of forging national unity by successfully initiating the move for the merger of the Princely States first into unions and later absorption into the Indian Union. He also acquired the reputation of an Iron Man as the party boss. Congress members of various legislative bodies and Pradesh Congress Committees were personally known to him and he gave no quarter to those guilty of indiscipline or misbehaviour.

I have attended most of the birthday celebrations of the Sardar at the Sardar Patel Vidyalyaya of the Gujarat Education Society, New Delhi, headed by my friend H. M. Patel—with a distinguished record in the ICS—now a member of the Lok Sabha. Every President, Vice-President and Prime Minister of India since the birth of Republic has presided over the celebrations at the Vidyalyaya. These distinguished persons had a different style and used the opportunity to refer to the Sardar and also expound their views on education and their political philosophy. The one who excelled their political philosophy, the one who excelled them all in my view in the appropriateness of the theme, was the late Dr. Zakir Hussain. He held the audience spell bound, not with homilies but with a narrative of anecdote after anecdote from the Sardar's life to show how human, how compassionate, how secular, how firm and how wise he was in all he said and did.

Another annual celebration in the Union Capital of the Sardar's birthday centres round the garlanding of his statue in the Patel Chowk facing Parliament House in Parliament Street, and a Jayanti Samaroh organized by the Citizens Council, Delhi, of which the leading figures are Prakash Veer Shastri and Kanwarlal Gupta. This function, too, has been presided over by two Presidents of the Union and by Jayaprakash Narain. This year the chief guest was Defence Minister Jagjivan Ram.

Since I was to deliver these lectures, I paid special attention to what was said about the great Sardar on his 97th birthday. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi referring to the trying period of the struggle for freedom called the Sardar a most shining star on the Indian firmament and recalled Sarojini Naidu's description of him as a golden jewel enclosed in an iron casket. He was firm or soft

as the occasion demanded. The Sardar, she added, wanted to make the country great and the nation should rededicate itself to the ideals he stood for.

An hour earlier, the Air Chief Marshal P. G. Lal garlanded the Sardar's statue in Patel Chowk and recalled that the great leader taught them steadfastness, initiative and discipline. There is a special appropriateness in the Air Chief Marshal's association with this function. It may not be remembered that it was the Sardar's initiative in rushing ammunition and men by mobilising all available civil aircraft that saved Srinagar airfield from invaders and enabled our troops to land and save it in the nick of time and turn the tide of war against Pakistan-backed tribal hordes. It was the skill of an air pilot that saved the Sardar's life when on a flight from Delhi to Jaipur the engine developed trouble and the pilot force-landed the plane safely by spotting in the dark night a sandy river bed.

The function annually organized by the Citizens Council of Delhi at the famous Red Fort is in a sense an attempt to fill the gap left by the neglect shown by the powers that be to do honour to the Sardar's memory in the way done to that of Gandhi and Nehru. There was loud clapping when Prakash Veer Shastri said at the function last month that the Prime Minister had stated to Patel Vidyalaya organizers that the coming centenary of the Sardar's birthday would be made a national affair.

Those who spoke at the Red Fort function spotlighted the highlights of a great career. Kanwarlal Gupta, former Jan Sangh MP, and President of the Celebration Committee, expressed the view that if Sardar Patel was not there the unity of India would not have been possible. The test of history, he added, was the stature a person gained after death. Piloo Medy, President of the Swatantra Party, described Sardar Patel as a model for those who wished to serve the nation. Kaka Kalelkar recalled that he embraced Gandhian politics when he found that the Mahatma had evolved a new plan of war which stamped him as a military genius. He had found in the Sardar the right general who believed in and worked for Praja Raj, not a capitalist Raj or a brahmin raj. Morarji Desai, leader of the Old Congress, named the Sardar as the greatest nation-builder after Gandhi and added that if the Sardar had been amidst them he would have found solution to the problems baffling the present leadership. Prakash Veer Shastri struck the right note by stating that the Sardar's stature grew taller with years and that was the real test of history.

Atal Behari Vajpayee, welcoming publication by the Navajivan Trust of Sardar Patel's correspondence, stated that the volume on Kashmir was a great revelation. It showed that it was the Sardar who worked behind the scene and brought the Maharaja round and thus saved Kashmir for India and uncovered the real face of Sheikh Abdullah.

Defence Minister Jagjivan Ram made his point effectively by recalling what Lord Mountbatten had told him in London in 1950, that whereas the former

Viceroy thought that India would take 15 years to be welded into a united nation, the Sardar had achieved the miracle in 10 to 12 months. The Defence Minister added that the Sardar stood for the welfare of the kisan and of labour and moulded capitalists to his purpose.

D. V. Tahmankar, a colleague, who worked as our London Correspondent when I was joint Editor of The Hindustan Times, has stated in his biography of Sardar Patel (page 285) published by Geoge Allen and Unwin Ltd. of London that "there is hardly a village or town in India which does not have a 'Mahatma Gandhi Road' or a 'Jawaharlal Nehru Park'; large pictures and statues of both men dominate the scene wherever you go. Sardar Patel is not given such widespread recognition; nor is that likely. Yet Patel's contribution to the making of modern India is no whit less vital important than that of the other two. If we were not denied the privilege of assessing the significance of his work with historical objectivity, because we are too near the events, we might say that Patel's work was more important, in some ways, than that of Nehru at least."

I could sense for the first time in the atmosphere of Delhi on 31 October that the ruling party had begun to feel that the Sardar was being monopolised by the Opposition parties, especially the Jan Sangh, and it should give up its previous posture and include the Sardar in its own pantheon of heroes. I may be wrong.

Perhaps this feeling has been partly inspired by the tribute Jaya Prakash Narain paid to the Sardar in the speech he had written out in Hindi for the celebration which abruptly ended last year as the siren for a black-out was sounded.

I quote extracts from the text of J. P.'s speech published in the Independence Day issue of the fortnightly magazine, The States of New Delhi. The English version of the speech has been authenticated by J. P. himself. He said: "Pandit Prakash Veerji recalled how on a similar occasion Rajaji unburdened his heart by publicly confessing to a wrong he had once done to the Sardar. Well, I find myself in the same situation; the dominant feeling within me today is one of self-reproachment because during his life time I was not merely a critic but an opponent of the great Sardar. For his leadership in the struggle for independence I had great admiration and respect. And yet we Congress Socialists, who wished to see India take to the path of socialism, considered the Sardar a reactionary who was and would remain a defender and supporter of capitalism. The Sardar's reason for displeasure with us was that as a Marxist I criticised Gandhiji's views and opposed them although I must say that I respected him to the point of reverence. . . . After independence the adroitness with which the Sardar integrated the various Princely States with India, peacefully and with the consent of rulers, was something unique. No other leader but the Sardar could have pulled off the feat. . . . The Kashmir issue alone was somehow

left to Pandit Nehru, which proved to be unfortunate for the nation. Because of Panditji's mishandling the issue is no longer our internal affair but is smouldering as a controversy in the U. N. and its Security Council and Pakistan rakes it up every now and then. Many a veteran leaders in the country maintain that had the matter been handled by the Sardar (and it fell within his domain) he would have found a satisfactory solution and thus prevented its becoming a perennial headache for us and a cause of bitterness and animosity between India and Pakistan. . . . I had been told that Jawaharlalji was considered an expert on foreign affairs in Congress circles. But two or three years ago I read in K. M. Munshi's 'Bhavan's Journal' a letter that the Sardar had written to Jawaharlalji in connection with Tibet which forcefully brought home to me the man's greatness. I was struck by Patel's matchless mastery even of subjects in which he was not considered an expert. Looking back at the history of the past few years I am convinced that had Jawaharlalji heeded the Sardar's advice, China would not have become the menace to us, that it is. . . . So long as the reins of the country were in the iron hands of the Sardar the progressives, viz., the Socialists and Communists, as also the Leftists in the Congress all complained that Patel made it impossible for Nehru to change the economic and social structure of the country. This I learnt from some responsible ministers. But with the passing away of the Sardar, Nehru had 13-14 years to prove himself. But apart from some verbal changes in the professed aims of the Congress, little progress was made towards socialism, as is plain for everybody to see. The rich have become richer and poor poorer and unemployment has mounted. Those who had voluntarily suffered privation and spent their youth behind bars succumbed to the lure of power and a life of ease and comfort."

It is appropriate to mention at this stage the plan Lalbahadur Shastri had for perpetuating the Sardar's memory. The "little man of steel" as he came to be known after the way he pushed back Pakistani invasion in 1965, was a confidant of Jawaharlal. That factor largely earned him the honour of leading the ruling party after Nehru's death. But Lalbahadur had risen from the ranks and was an admirer of Sardar Patel. He told me that while he would adhere to his predecessor's ideology, he would change his economic policy and his priorities, his approach was that of the Sardar in the way production of wealth should be married to social justice. He set into motion the idea of raising statues for the triumvirate at the eastern end of Raj Path in New Delhi. He wanted to instal Gandhi's statue under the canopy where King George's statue was originally placed. He wanted this to be flanked by statues of Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel. His sudden death ended that laudable project; now even a statue of Gandhi has not been either approved or installed. Perhaps the idea of Lalbahadur will be revived in the changing climate of the country, and the centenary of the Sardar would mark the awaited spurt in projecting the image of the great integrator.

I have no doubt that the Sardar would have summarily dismissed all ideas of naming institutions after him or raising statues. He did it in the case of a proposal emanating from Bangalore for raising institutions named after him and Maniben. He was even opposed to preserving records of his letters. As recalled by Maniben his philosophy was summed up in the injunction: "Why not create history rather than waste time writing it?"

I presume most of you know B. Shiva Rao, veteran journalist-cum-politician. He and his wife Kitty Shiva Rao were among the circle of persons who had ready access to Nehru and were his admirers. Shiva Rao had taken special interest in Constitution-making since he worked as an aide to Annie Besant in preparing the draft of a Commonwealth of India Bill and as an aide to Tej Bahadur Sapru in preparing the outline of a constitution for India. He was a member of the Constituent Assembly and since his brother the famous jurist Sir Benegal Narasimha Rao was Constitutional Adviser to the Nehru Cabinet, Shiva Rao had a unique opportunity to assess the part played by various individuals in shaping the key sections of the Constitution. He has written an article on this subject in the souvenir published on the occasion of the celebration of the Sardar's 97th birthday by the Citizens Council in Delhi.

Shiva Rao had given a vivid account of how the Sardar master-minded delicate questions raised by fundamental rights and the issue of minorities. He assesses the Sardar in the following words: "His forthright manner was often misunderstood; but he was a realist to the core and the goal he had set for himself and before the country was of a strong and united nation. No one among the leaders who were at the helm of affairs at a crucial period in our history had Sardar Patel's vision and his rare capacity for wise compromise."

Shiva Rao had also recalled the words of the Sardar as he considers them relevant today in the wake of the recent abolition of the privileges of the ICS officers. The Sardar had said: "When the Independence Act was to be passed in Parliament the draft was sent here. The leaders of the nation were called for; the Cabinet was there, the Congress President was there, your President was there and your Leader was there. Mahatma Gandhi was also present. Every section was scrutinized and the draft was approved. After that it was passed in Parliament. Now, these guarantees were circulated before that to the provinces. All provinces agreed. It was also agreed to incorporate these into the Constituent Assembly's new Constitution. That is one part of the guarantee. Have you read that history? Or, you do not care for recent history after you have begun to make history? If you do that I will tell you we have a dark future. Learn to stand upon your pledged word, and, also as a man of experience I tell you, do not quarrel with the instruments with which you want to work."

The Sardar's magnanimity and sense of fairplay have been brought out strikingly by a small incident. A member of the Congress Party asked the Sardar with a sense of grievance: "Why was Dr. Ambedkar, who had been a bitter

critic of Gandhiji and an opponent of the Congress Party, chosen to be the Chairman of the Drafting Committee? The Sardar's reply was characteristic: "What do you know of Constitution-making?" he asked and added, "We have chosen the best man for the job."

I can add to this from personal knowledge that he had the late Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Aiyar as his personal guest and even recommended him for ambassadorship in Washington. He forgave Sir C. P. the unpatriotic part he had played in joining hands with the Corfield-Bhopal clique and advising the Maharaja of Travancore to opt for independence since he had his sea coast free to keep contact with Pakistan and other friendly countries. It was enough for the Sardar that Sir C. P. had recanted and that his talent was at the country's service. These incidents demolish the charge that the Sardar never forgave those who crossed his path. If Sardar Patel's thoughts as revealed in the correspondence could be codified, they would help the growth of healthy public life, an efficient and honest administration and creation of a climate in which the nation's wealth would grow and so also general welfare based on social justice.

According to him, for instance, the only bastions of security, law and order in Asia are India and Japan. The Pakistan Government, he felt, had fallen a victim to the familiar Nazi disease of seeing enemies all round themselves.

He believed that increased production and prosperity and economic stability would be possible only if Government, employers and workers all cooperated in an intensive drive. He once said: "We have to beware of the communist cells inside Government itself, the increasing evidence of which is causing us serious concern." It seemed to him quite plain that India could not take any more refugees from East Bengal without a territorial readjustment between East and West Bengal. He favoured special arrangements for supplying producers of foodgrain their requirements of cloth, kerosene, building materials etc.

He firmly believed that while emotions of the public could be controlled by orations on platforms by charismatic leaders, the morale of the administration once jolted, could not be restored. I quote his words which still ring true:

"Unless we are quite clear as to where the politician begins and the administrator ends and vice versa, we are not likely to achieve that administrative adjustment between the Government servants and the politicians which is necessary for the smooth working of a democratic Government."

There were at least four occasions when Jawaharlal Nehru expressed a desire to resign the Prime Ministership in favour of Sardar Patel. The first occasion was over the powers of a Prime Minister vis-a-vis Cabinet Ministers. He was also sore over the way Rajen Babu had been elected President of the Republic and Purshottamdas Tandon President of the Congress in preference to the persons Nehru had in mind. He also felt that his policies did not enjoy the confidence of the majority of Congressmen in Parliament.

Sardar Patel and Jawaharlal Nehru came to the brink of relinquishing office in each other's favour over differences, first in regard to his action on communal disturbances in Ajmer-Merwara in December 1947 snowballing into a serious conflict over the definition of the functions of the Prime Minister in relation to his colleagues and the preparation of memoranda by both for presentation to Gandhi for his adjudication. The assassination of Gandhi at this crucial period acted, however, as a cementing bond between them.

I am not free to quote extracts from the history-making correspondence that passed between the two on these subjects. The letters will be found in Sardar Patel's correspondence volumes VI to X yet to be published. They throw much light on the position of a Prime Minister vis-a-vis the Cabinet and the role of a party leader.

I may read, however, a paragraph from page 305 of my memoirs 'India—from Curzon to Nehru and After' (published by Collins of England and also by John Day of New York in English and by Wilco of Bombay in Hindi):

"At the last talk I had with him (the Sardar) a few days before his death in Bombay on 15 December 1950, Patel showed me a letter dated 7 November 1950, he had written to Nehru. (The letter was published by K. M. Munshi in Bhavan's Journal in its issue of 26th February, 1967, because of its historic importance; its text is given in my memoirs too). After I finished reading it he said: 'I loved Nehru but he has not reciprocated. I have been eating my heart out because I have not been able to make him see the dangers ahead. China wants to establish its hegemony over South East Asia. We cannot shut our eyes to this because imperialism is appearing in a new garb. He does not realise that people work only when they have the employment motive or the profit motive. He is being misled by his courtiers. I have grave apprehensions about the future.'"

Maniben Patel in her note on her father's life published in the volumes of Sardar's correspondence has stated: "The outlook of the Sardar and of Nehru was vastly different. They agreed to differ, but at the same time worked together for the common cause of India's freedom. The influence of Mridula Sarabhai and Rafi Ahmed Kidwai on Nehru was to a large extent responsible for the rift between my father and Jawaharlal."

Historians will try to assess how these main characters on the Indian stage acted and reacted to the challenges of the time and to the problems posed by their differing approach and outlook. There is indeed hardly a national or regional issue of consequence in contemporary history the origin of which cannot be traced to the five crucial years during which the Sardar acted the statesman.

The fact is Nehru and Patel were complementary characters. Nehru was brought up in the Fabian ideology of Sydney and Beatrice Webb which upheld parliamentary democracy as the instrument of human fulfilment. But the moral

and ideological aspect of Britain's political life and public postures was like the husk on the inner core of rice. Sardar Patel was interested in the inner core, the British genius for organisation and administration. He understood human psychology and what made the British Raj click.

Nehru understood the spirit of the age, social and economic justice for the underdog. Patel was in tune with the call of history—India's history—beset with examples of disintegration when the Central authority weakened and intrigues, manoeuvres and selfishness became the motivating force of the elite. Nehru was the idealist dreamer, Patel the stern teacher with a cane hanging on the wall.

From what I have briefly sketched it follows that Sardar Patel was the model man in the way he worked hard to mould his life and the clean way he acted as a soldier and a general of Mahatma Gandhi's army of civil resisters.

He was the model politician in the yardstick he applied to himself and to others in considering themselves as members of the order of faqirs dedicated selflessly to the service of the people.

He pricked the bubble of superiority of Britons in the way he practised law, managed municipal affairs in Ahmedabad, fought drought, flood and bubonic plague, led satyagraha and the campaign in Bardoli.

He was a model politician in the manner he organized election campaigns, selected candidates and admonished all that power and pelf were to be shunned in administering public offices.

He was a model politician in the pragmatic way he proposed acceptance of the Cabinet Mission plan and the creation of a Dominion Government.

He was a model politician in his relations with the Press. He was most accessible: indeed keen to know what Pressmen thought of the day's events and what they wished him to react to or enlighten them on. He was an effective speaker on platform and in Parliament, the darling of newsmen who appreciated remarks brief, clear and straight from the shoulder.

That he kept himself well-informed is confirmed by Maniben's statement that "the Sardar looked through the morning newspapers carefully and rarely missed any significant news" and that he also listened to radio's news bulletins.

The editor of a popular magazine reviewing in his personal column my memoirs called me a 'Patehite'. I was amused and also amazed. I was amused because he had resurrected an epithet invented by flatterers in the Nehru Court, There were of course politicians so labelled at the time. For instance, Govind Ballabh Pant was a Patelite and Rafi Ahmed Kidwai a Nehruite. But these terms went out of currency in the early fifties. I felt that if the editor had fully read the book he should have discovered that I had observed one cannon of journalism, namely, that as a newsmen, an analyst and a commentator I tried to carry the voice of dissent to the corridors of power.

I confess, however, that now that my journalistic career has virtually come to a close with the editing of the ten volumes of Sardar Patel's bulky correspondence, I have become a Patelite in the sense, that I present Vallabhbhai Patel as a model nation builder.

The Sardar's career as a statesman began with the advent of independence. By plumping for Dominion Status he won over Lord Mountbatten and got his support in making most of the States to accede to India by 15th August, 1947. He succeeded in creating a larger India under one administration than ever in the country's history by his acts of statesmanship in three phases. He won over some leading Princes by creating in them confidence in his sense of fairplay and wisdom. He made many Princes merge with larger neighbouring provinces or States out of fear that the Iron Man would have his way. Thirdly, he stood firm as a rock in his demand that the Nizam must accede to the Indian Union on the same terms as the other Princes. He did not succumb to the pressure subtly put by Lord Mountbatten by making Nehru and Rajaji agree with him in favour of a Mountbatten-Monckton formula. Fortunately, the fanatics headed by Kasim Razvi, who had fired the Nizam's imagination with dreams of becoming His Majesty and later over-running India in alliance with Pakistan, prevented the Monckton formula getting off the ground. I have stated in my memoirs that Lord Mountbatten had told his publicity officer to prepare material for his departure in a blaze of glory after pulling through the impending deal with Hyderabad.

Had Hyderabad State acceded to the Indian Union, the pattern of Indian polity would have been different. Hyderabad and several Unions of States would have proposed an Indian federation in which the Centre would have been weak. I have no doubt that the Sardar's unbending stand on the issue of Hyderabad changed the course of history and that this attitude, followed by police action and elimination of communist terrorism in Telengana, gave the Indian Union a flying start.

Vallabhbhai Patel thus emerges as a great organiser and consolidator of modern India. Over 70 when he assumed ministerial office for the first time, he carried on his ailing shoulders the crushing burden of building the political infra-structure of the new India. Death prevented him from completing his task, but what he achieved as a statesman in four short years endures till today despite periodical contrary changes in wind.

We salute this common man, a true karma yogi, who carved out a glorious destiny for himself and the country.

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ERRATA

Volume VI: page 273, M.V. Jayakar, *not* M.R. Jayakar, is the solicitor referred to in the correspondence; page 370, Tricumdas is Tricumdas Dwarkadas; page 245, Dr. Popatlal A. Bhopatkar was a resident of Karachi, *not* Poona; page 321, M.C. Chagla and M.R. Jayakar (*not* Jivraj Mehta) are sitting to the right of the Governor, Maharaj Singh.

Volume VII: page 21, Sir M.V. Joshi was a Moderate, *not* a Congress leader at the time; B.G. Khaparde was a son of G.S. Khaparde; page 324, M. Madhava Rao was a former Diwan of Mysore.
